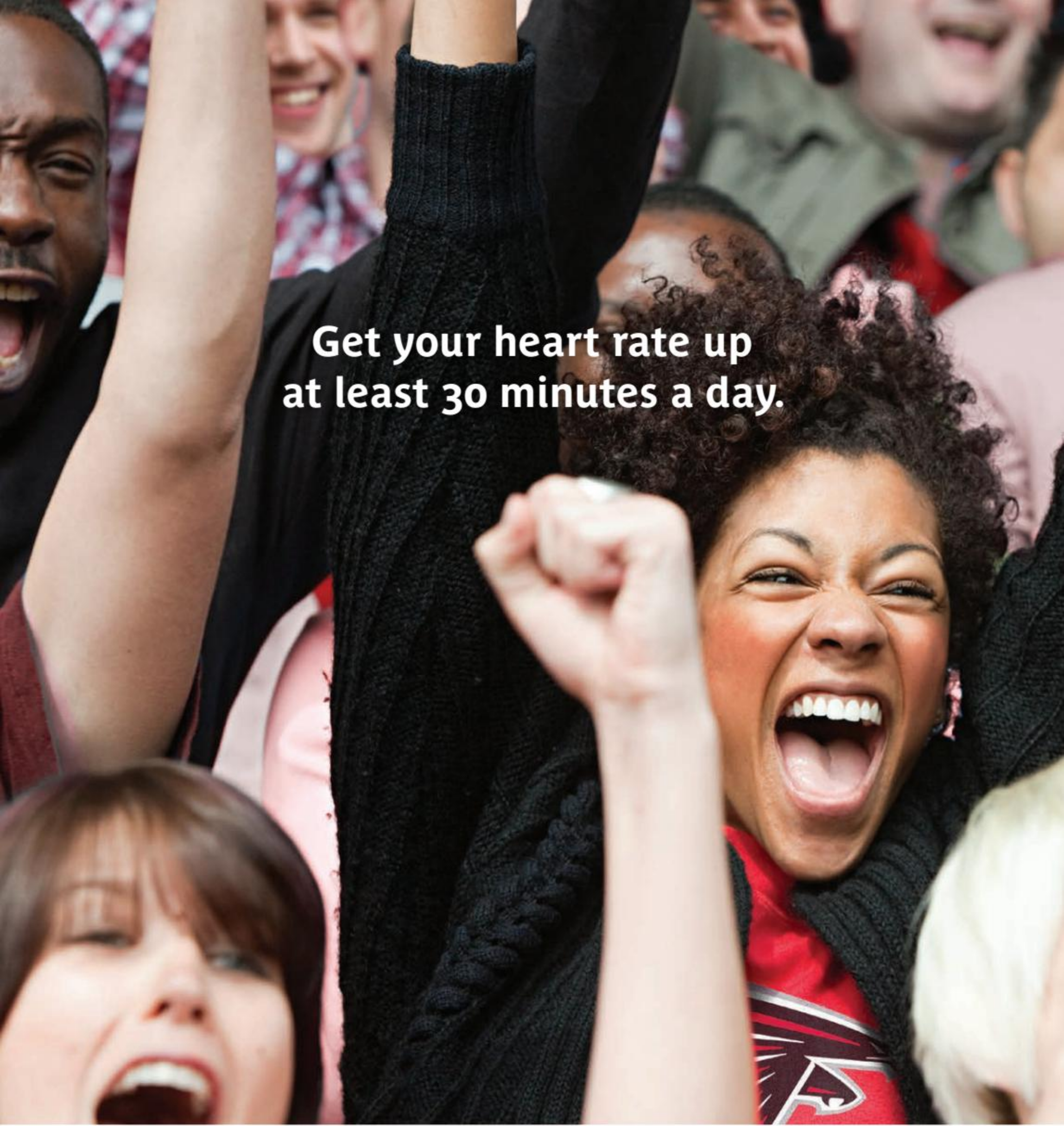


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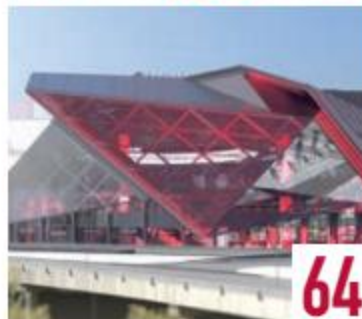
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PRESEASON 01



MIAMI
FRIDAY, AUGUST 8 // 7:00 PM
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WEEK 01



NEW ORLEANS
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 // 1:00 PM
THE GEORGIA DOME



WEEK 10



@ TAMPA BAY
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9 // 1:00 PM*
RAYMOND JAMES STADIUM



PRESEASON 02



@ HOUSTON
SATURDAY, AUGUST 16 // 8:00 PM
NRG STADIUM



WEEK 02



@ CINCINNATI
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 // 1:00 PM
PAUL BROWN STADIUM



WEEK 11



@ CAROLINA
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16 // 1:00 PM*
BANK OF AMERICA STADIUM



PRESEASON 03



TENNESSEE
SATURDAY, AUGUST 23 // 7:00 PM
THE GEORGIA DOME



WEEK 03



TAMPA BAY
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 // 8:25 PM**
THE GEORGIA DOME



WEEK 12



CLEVELAND
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23 // 1:00 PM*
THE GEORGIA DOME



PRESEASON 04



@ JACKSONVILLE
THURSDAY, AUGUST 28 // 6:00 PM
EVERBANK FIELD



WEEK 04



@ MINNESOTA
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 // 4:25 PM
TCF BANK STADIUM



WEEK 13



ARIZONA
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30 // 4:05 PM*
THE GEORGIA DOME



WEEK 05



@ NY GIANTS
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5 // 1:00 PM*
METLIFE STADIUM



WEEK 14



@ GREEN BAY
MONDAY, DECEMBER 8 // 8:30 PM**
LAMBEAU FIELD



WEEK 06



CHICAGO
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12 // 1:00 PM*
THE GEORGIA DOME



WEEK 15



PITTSBURGH
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14 // 1:00 PM*
THE GEORGIA DOME



WEEK 07



@ BALTIMORE
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19 // 1:00 PM*
M&T BANK STADIUM



WEEK 16



@ NEW ORLEANS
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21 // 1:00 PM*
MERCEDES-BENZ SUPERDOME



WEEK 08



DETROIT (IN LONDON)
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26 // 9:30 AM*
WEMBLEY STADIUM



WEEK 17



CAROLINA
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28 // 1:00 PM*
THE GEORGIA DOME



WEEK 09



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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2 // BYE



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Falcons Preview

By Craig Sager II

Atlanta looks to get back to winning ways behind solid core, talented group of free agents, rookies

New stadium construction to the Georgia Dome's neighboring landscape are not going to be the only big changes Falcons fans should notice when heading to games this season. Change within the team has manifested itself across the board, from the front office down to the coaches and players.

These transformations began during the 2013 season, when the team battled through injuries and placed rookies and first-time starters into NFL spotlight for the first time. The experienced core that helped the Falcons finish with five consecutive winning seasons expanded as the young players began to master the terminology and playing style with each preceding week. Now, there is a combination of emerging talent and established veterans dotting the roster that curved the 2014 Falcons into a team many believe will return to the postseason this year.

The Falcons were the epitome of the "next man up" mantra in 2013 and confidence grew and carried over into their offseason. A confident team is also a competitive team and the young guns that filled in for veterans last year competed to retain their roles on the depth chart. Position battles highlighted OTA's, workouts and training camp, and the overall intensity helped the team prepare for its challenging 2014 slate. With more capable second and even third string guys on the roster, the playbooks expanded on both sides of the ball and coordinators were able to draw up new looks and experiment with new pieces brought in the draft and free agency.

PROVEN PICKUPS

A pair of January coaching hires added more toughness and experience in the trenches. On Jan. 8, Mike Tice was hired as the offensive line coach and four days later, Bryan Cox was brought in to lead the defensive line. Adding

toughness was the primarily goal for this offseason and not only does Tice bring a successful playing and coaching career to the job, but he demands toughness from his offensive line. Tice describes a football team as a sports car. The receivers and skill players can be considered the spokes or rims of the vehicle and the quarterback can be the steering wheel, but offensive line must be the engine that drives it.

"I've always felt that people that say you can't be physical in pass [protection] don't know what they're talking about," Tice said. "I think we've got to change some mindsets around here, and that's what we're trying to do. We're trying to change the mindsets of the guys up front to understand that if there's a 60-play game, you're

in 60 boxing matches."

Like Tice, Cox asserts his tenacity into the gameplan while coaching. His successful playing career earned him three All-Pro seasons and Cox was able to hoist the Lombardi Trophy while playing for the New England Patriots in 2001. Cox was fearless as a player and was able to build bonds with his teammates in each of his five NFL destinations during his career. These traits and leadership qualities made Cox the ideal hire for a position group filled with veteran defensive linemen that are leading a defense young in its secondary and linebacking corps.

BULKING SEASON

Atlanta wasted little time to make moves in free agency and bulked up both lines of scrimmage on its opening day. Defensive tackle Jonathan Babineaux and center Joe Hawley were key re-signings. The first acquisition was right guard Jon Asamoah from the Kansas City Chiefs. Asamoah started 41 of the 60 games in his Kansas City Chiefs career and helped the Chiefs offense finish in the top 15 in rushing three consecutive years, including 149.7 yards per game in 2012 (fifth in the NFL).

On the defensive side of the ball, Atlanta inked two disruptive run-stoppers. Paul Soliai, a 6-foot-4, 344-pounder, was picked up from Miami. Soliai has played in 77 games over the last five years and will improve the team's run defense with his huge presence.

Atlanta added another physical cornerstone to the line with the addition of 6-foot-4, 295-pound defensive end Tyson Jackson from Kansas City. Jackson, the No. 3 pick in the 2009 NFL draft, is entering the prime years of his NFL career. Last season was Jackson's most productive year in the League and he had a career-high with four sacks while adding three passes defended and 34 tackles.

60-36

Falcons record since 2008, the sixth-best mark in the NFL.



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"Those guys (Soliai and Jackson) are big guys that are going to be able to anchor the defensive line," said Smith. "That's what we need to be able to do. We've got to stop the ball from getting to the second level. We've got to be much better defending the run and those big guys up front are going to be an integral part of our success."

Young secondaries are commonplace in the NFL and Atlanta houses two of the most promising young corners in the League. Cornerbacks Desmond Trufant and Robert Alford started the majority of the 2013 season together as rookies and each hauled in a pair of interceptions. Both have even more big-play potential to come with more playing time. Trufant was named to the All-NFL rookie team with a franchise rookie record of 17 passes defended.

Pro Bowler William Moore is the hard-hitting safety net of the defense. Moore had to spend last season developing a good chemistry with the two new corners in the Falcons secondary.

Free safety Dwight Lowery was picked up from the Jets and cornerback/nickelback Javier Arenas was signed from the Chiefs in free agency. These moves add versatility and veteran playmakers that will boost depth to one of the team's thinnest position groups from a season ago.

When it comes to defensive communication, the middle level handles a large part of this responsibility. Sean Weatherspoon's ruptured Achilles during OTA's was a tough blow for the Falcons, but luckily, they are well-prepared after the linebacking corps got hit with injuries last season. Undrafted rookie free agents Joplo Bartu and Paul Worrilow adapted quickly and showed maturity beyond their years both physically and mentally as they stepped into the starting role.

Worrilow finished tied for 12th in the NFL last season with a team-leading 137 total tackles while pacing all rookies in the category. He finished as one of the League's top tacklers despite not seeing significant action until the fifth week of the season. Bartu finished third on the team in tackles with 96.

PLAN OF ATTACK

Offensively, Matt Ryan attempted a career-high 651 passes last season while competing 67.4 percent of them for 4,515 yards. Ryan put up these numbers without his main targets Roddy White and Julio Jones on the field together for the majority of the season.

White enters 2014 on the cusp of a milestone that would solidify his place as the best receiver in franchise history. He sits third all-time in touchdown receptions with 55 behind Andre Rison's 56 and Mathis' 57. White's current records with the Falcons speak for themselves. He's the all-time receiving leader with 9,436 yards (2,087 ahead of second-place Terance Mathis) and the career receptions leader (685) ahead of Mathis by a staggering 112 receptions.

Ryan will once again be the centerpiece of the offense and he will have plenty of weapons to distribute the football to. Harry Douglas

4 Falcons playoff berths since 2008. Tied for the second-best mark in the NFL.

filled in last season after Jones suffered his season-ending foot injury and finished the season with 85 catches for 1,067 yards. Douglas' previous career highs for a season were 39 catches and 498 yards.

"Harry's confidence has to be sky-high (after) going for over 1,000 yards last season," said Falcons Offensive Coordinator Dirk Koetter. "I think one of the things that really helps us as a team and as an offense is that Matt really gained a lot of confidence in Harry because for a good part of the season, Harry was our best option at wide receiver. I think our backups like Drew Davis and Darius Johnson benefited as well."

In the backfield, Steven Jackson, Jacquizz Rogers, Antone Smith and rookie Devonta Freeman aim to establish the ground game after the team finished 2013 last in the NFL in rushing yards per game.

Freeman began to stand out immediately upon arrival this offseason and looks to be in line for a role in this year's playbook. Jackson returns as the centerpiece in the backfield after rushing for six touchdowns in last season's limited action. He currently sits 20th all time in career rushing yards and leads all active players with 10,678 yards on the ground.

"[This year's rushing offense] is not going to be three yards and a cloud of dust," said Jackson. "I think once all of our horses are back [healthy], we get the scheme going and guys adjust to (offensive line) coach (Mike) Tice's coaching style, I think we're going to be quite alright."

The production of kicker Matt Bryant and punter Matt Bosher has put them in the top tier of the NFL during their Atlanta careers. The Falcons kicking game looks similar with these two guys, but the return game changes drastically with the addition of Devin Hester. Hester is arguably the

greatest return man in NFL history and tied Deion Sanders with 19 career return touchdowns last season with the Bears during an 81-yard return at Washington. Hester's career marks total 3,241 yards on 264 punt returns with 12.3 yards per return. On kickoff returns, Hester has accounted for 5,504 yards on 222 career returns.

In 2013, Atlanta's longest kickoff return was 34 yards and the longest punt return was 25 yards. Hester's eight seasons in the pros includes 13 punt returns for touchdowns and five kickoff returns for touchdowns. Hester can also step into the offense and Koetter says they would be 'foolish' to not use his playmaking ability. Hester has 14 career receiving touchdowns.

THE SLATE

Atlanta's 2014 schedule is another challenging slate. Their AFC opponents (Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Cleveland and Cincinnati) hail from the physical North division, while a trip to London, a trio of road games and a Week 9 bye creates a rare six-week gap in the heart of the season between games played at the Georgia Dome. Atlanta's opponents finished .512 last season, the 11th highest winning percentage for opponents in the NFL this upcoming season. The Falcons open with none other than New Orleans, the franchise's long-time rival and division opponent. This season, however, the game is in Atlanta. It is the first home season-opener for the Falcons since 2009.

From the NFC, the Falcons draw all four teams from the North division, including another late-season road trip to the Frozen Tundra of Green Bay. It will be the fifth time the Falcons have played the Packers since 2010. Also from the NFC, Atlanta will play the Cardinals and Giants. ///



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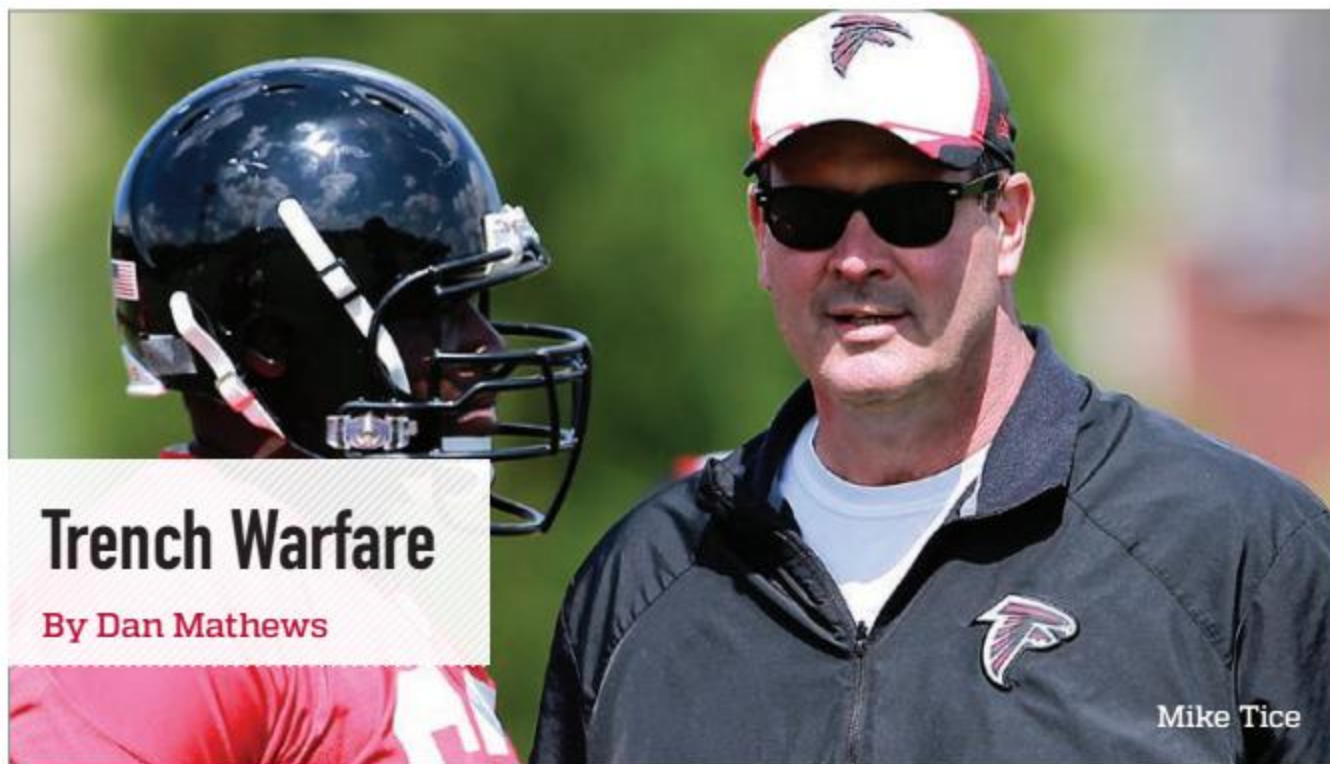
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Trench Warfare

By Dan Mathews

Mike Tice

Bryan Cox

Former NFL stars Cox, Tice bring toughness to Falcons lines of scrimmage

During the offseason, the Falcons wanted to get tougher up front. With that in mind, the franchise brought in Mike Tice from the Chicago Bears to lead the offensive line and Bryan Cox to lead the defensive line.

SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

Both coaches come in with impressive resumes as players in the NFL to go along with their experience teaching players the techniques of the game. Falcons Head Coach Mike Smith prefers to hire coaches who have played in the League.

"When you put a staff together you want former players on your staff," Smith said. "I think it's important. The whole time that we've been here, we've made sure that we've had a sprinkling of players that have been in the locker room."

The combined NFL experience of Cox and Tice is 26 years and they have been coaching in the League for a combined 27 years. They each bring to the team a fierce, in-your-face style of coaching. This is something that Defensive Coordinator Mike Nolan noticed about his defensive line coach.

"There's no beating around the bush with Bryan," Nolan said. "Bryan says it just like he sees it and I think players appreciate that a lot."

Fans who headed out to training camp noticed this with Cox when he put the defensive linemen through drills. They also noticed a defensive line that is very aggressive with their hands when engaging blockers. This is something that Nolan has witnessed.

"Coach (Mike) Tice and (Assistant Offensive Line) Coach (Wade) Harman have both complimented Bryan and the defensive line for their hand usage in the pass rush," Nolan said. "So hopefully that helps us. It can't hurt."

PROTECTING RYAN

As far as the offensive line goes, Atlanta used its first pick on offensive tackle Jake Matthews to help improve that position group. This line rarely had a consistent group of five guys starting from week to week in 2013. Either this was due to injury or just the lack of effective play on the field. So the Falcons brought in Tice to help this group improve and better protect quarterback Matt Ryan. Matthews is a huge fan of Tice's enthusiastic coaching style.

"You love to see that in your offensive line coach," Matthews said. "That's someone you want to play for and he's fired up every day. I love going out there working for him."

Tice is trying to help an offensive line that gave up over 40 quarterback sacks on Ryan last season. Also, the Falcons were subpar running the football, averaging only 79 yards per game. These are two points of emphasis for Tice to improve upon in 2014 and beyond.

"First thing we wanted to do is protect the quarterback better and figure out why we didn't do a good job of doing that last year," Tice said. "We wanted run the ball better and run the ball with efficiency, be explosive when we can."

Tice says he went through game film from last season to determine the issues the offensive line was causing that led to high sack totals and low returns running the football. He feels that increased communication within the group could help alleviate those troubles. He's also been trying to figure out what his players' strengths are as blockers.

In terms of trying to run the football with more effectiveness in 2014, left tackle Sam Baker is on board with Tice's wish.

"You want take pride in anything the offensive coordinator is calling," Baker said. "If they're

having us drop back and pass block, we want to take pride in all of that, too."

Getting back to Cox, the players are responsive to his style of coaching and like the way he's treated them so far on the practice fields. Veteran defensive lineman Jonathan Babineaux is back for his 10th season with the Falcons and is one of those players receptive to Cox's coaching style.

"He wants us to go out there and prepare every day," Babineaux said. "We're doing a (few) different drills this year and I think it's going to help us continue to have a good rotation on the defensive line this year."

Cox intends for this defensive line to be very active with their hands when they take on blockers this season. That is something that he readily admits we'll see from this team.

"We want to (have) live hands and we want to be strong," Cox said. "But I would say the biggest characteristic is that we want to be versatile. We want to be able to do a lot of things up there in that front line."

Cox has 10 returning veteran defensive linemen to work with in his first season as their position coach. Cox also gets an addition to this line in the form of second-round pick and defensive end Ra'Shede Hageman out of Minnesota. Cox had the chance to work with him at this year's Senior Bowl in Mobile, Ala.

Cox makes no bones about what he expects out of his players and from his experience playing in the NFL, he knows what it takes to be successful at the position.

"I don't get caught up in stats," Cox said. "To me, successful is being able to do the job you're asked to do. That's success, period." ///

BRYAN COX

PLAYING CAREER: Dolphins (1991-1995), Bears (1996-1997), Jets (1998-2000), Patriots (2001), Saints (2002).
COACHING CAREER: Jets (2006-2008), Browns (2009-2010), Dolphins (2011), Bucs (2012-2013), Falcons (2014).

MIKE TICE

PLAYING CAREER: Seahawks (1981-1988), Redskins (1989), Seahawks (1990-1991), Vikings (1992-1993, 1995).
COACHING CAREER: Vikings (1996-2005), Jaguars (2006-2009), Bears (2010-2012), Falcons (2014).



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Dezmen Southward

2014 Draft Recap

By Craig Sager II

Falcons draft big-time tackle at No. 6, also take Freeman and seven defensive players

Since their inaugural season in 1966, the Atlanta Falcons have selected players in the NFL Draft to build tradition and take the franchise to new heights. Tommy Nobis set the standard as Atlanta's first-ever draft pick in 1966 and Hall of Famers, Pro Bowlers and fan favorites have been selected since. Each season when the Falcons bring in a new class of draftees, they stand in the same shoes as the team's all-time greats that did it before them. There are draft picks that have a lasting and, in some cases, living legacy with the Falcons. Those types of players set the bar high for every incoming rookie.

TOP TACKLE

With Atlanta's first pick of this year's draft, it selected offensive tackle Jake Matthews with the No. 6 overall pick. This polished 6-foot-5, 305-pounder hails from Texas A&M and became just the second offensive lineman taken by the franchise in the first round during the past 22 seasons. The selection was a perfect fit as the Falcons were getting an offensive lineman with overall No. 1 pick talent and Matthews was sent to a franchise that can contend for a Super Bowl despite being one of the draft's first picks.

"I think this pick was a steal," Matthews said. "Being able to be picked this high and to such a great team ... this is a team that can compete for the Super Bowl next year. I'm happy to be a part of it and hopefully can help protect Matt Ryan. I can't keep saying it, whatever they want me to do I'm going to do it. I'm really excited to get in and start working."

Jake, the son of Hall of Famer Bruce Matthews and the cousin of Green Bay's Clay Matthews, was born to play the game. His family's success on the gridiron places heavy expectations on the rookie, but has also been the high standard fueling Matthews to greatness throughout his collegiate career.

"I feel that I'm aggressive," Matthews said about his playing style. "I'm a guy that knows what it takes to finish, but at the same time not being overly aggressive and doing something stupid. Also, I think I'm a big technician. I take a lot of pride in what it takes to play offensive line and there's a lot more that goes into it than just having a hot head."

Matthews seems to be the perfect fit for an offensive line that prides itself on execution and mistake-free football. Veteran guard Jon Asamoah is slated to play right guard adjacent to Matthews at the right tackle position.

GETTING DEFENSIVE

Seven of Atlanta's nine picks were on the defensive side of the football and Ra'Shede Hageman at pick No. 37 was the first taken this year. Hageman has the athleticism needed on the defensive line and at 6-foot-6, 310-pounds can line up as a defensive tackle or end. Hageman played his collegiate career at Minnesota and showed

his versatility as an all-Big Ten selection last season with 38 total tackles, 13 tackles-for-loss, two sacks, two blocked kicks and an interception. His ability to disrupt the line of scrimmage and create mismatches is an ideal trait for coordinator Mike Nolan's multiple packages.

Hageman got experience working with new Falcons Defensive Line Coach Bryan Cox at Senior Bowl practices and developed a bond with his now position coach.

"He [Cox] definitely gave us tips on the future and what to work on during those practices," Hageman said. "So, I feel like me and him connected and bonded based off the Senior Bowl."

Hageman had a clear understanding of both his opportunities on this football team and his role as he worked with Cox to master the defensive tackle position.

"I definitely put a lot of pressure on myself just to be good," Hageman said. "To convert from college to the NFL takes time and you have to be patient. I'm just taking baby steps and listening to Coach Cox about how to be a better defensive tackle. It is important to learn both end and tackle in this defense. You've got to know the whole d-line. I feel like once I get a better understanding of the whole defense, I'll be more comfortable."

The Falcons delved into the Big 10's crop of talent again for their third pick of the draft and selected Dezmen Southward out of Wisconsin with the No. 68 pick in the third round. Southward set a Badgers school record with appearances in 54 games during his collegiate career and included 30 starts and 28 consecutive starts to close his career. Experience is a strength of the incoming rookie and he proved his knack to make big plays throughout his career.

Southward, a two-time consensus All-Big Ten honorable mention, finished his career with

Ra'Shede Hageman

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Ra'Shede Hageman



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152 tackles, four forced fumbles, two interceptions and 11 passes defended. Southward was a basketball star at powerhouse St. Thomas Aquinas in Florida and did not play organized football until his senior season. However, he stepped in and started his first season on a high school team that finished No. 1 in the nation that year. His father, Eli, coaches defensive backs at Toledo and he has been a student of the game throughout his year-to-year improvement as a football player.

"We looked at the idea of any of these defensive backs to have versatility to line up in the slot," Dimitroff said. "He [Southward] aligned out at the corner before, and as well as safety. We're bringing him in as a free safety. A big guy that's a free safety who ran a 4.3 is a positive."

SKILLED PLAYER

The Falcons' only other offensive selection was running back Devonta Freeman in the fourth round. Freeman is a proven playmaker that helped Florida State claim the 2014 BCS National Title.

Freeman earned All-ACC first-team honors his senior season and rushed for 1,106 yards and scored 15 total touchdowns in becoming the first FSU running back since Warrick Dunn in 1996 to rush for 1,000 yards. He is also tied for third in school history with 30 rushing touchdowns.

Freeman has the tools to be a three-down back in the NFL and he entered offseason workouts on a mission to prove his worth. The best asset Freeman provides is his toughness in pass protection, something critical in this day and age.

"I feel like I can come in and make a great impact because I know how to make guys miss in small areas and small creases and, for my size, I feel like I'm physical," said Freeman. "I can be a three-down back... If you can block and protect the quarterback then that's the main part. Catching and running the ball is the easy part and comes naturally, but blocking, that's something you have to have heart. I take a lot of pride in that,

so it's one of the things I work at the most."

Freeman believes his strength is making guys miss in close space and his low base and quick feet make him the ideal build for these traits.

TACKLING MACHINES

Prince Shembo was the first of four linebackers taken in this year's draft and the Falcons have moved the former Notre Dame standout to the interior linebacker role. Shembo proved to be a capable pass rusher at the college level and the move to the inside is something that Nolan hopes will get the best out of Shembo's skillset.

"I think it helps us and it helps him," said Nolan about the move. "I think he's [Shembo's] better suited to play the inside more than he is the outside. His skills are more for that role."

Smith was impressed with Shembo's range this offseason and pointed out multiple ways the defender can help the Falcons.

"He has the ability to play defensive end, outside linebacker and inside linebacker," Smith said. "He's got the flexibility. As this defense has matured, we got guys that line up in different spots. He may look like he's lined up as an inside linebacker but when the ball is snapped, he's doing the job of a defensive end. That's the fun part of the putting this defense together."

The Falcons took cornerback Ricardo Allen in the fifth round and added depth to the position and a hard-nosed ballhawk that proved his ability to produce game-changing plays while at Purdue. Allen finished his career with 13 interceptions and included four interception returns for touchdowns.

The final three picks of the draft were linebackers as Atlanta added Marquis Spruill, Yawin Smallwood and Tyler Starr. This trio along with Shembo made the linebacker corps one of the most heated position battles this offseason.

The Falcons traded a sixth- and seventh-round pick to take Spruill in the fifth round

ROUND 1	PICK 6	Jake Matthews OT
ROUND 2	PICK 37	Ra'Shede Hageman DT
ROUND 3	PICK 68	Dezmen Southward S
ROUND 4	PICK 103	Devonta Freeman RB
ROUND 4	PICK 139	Prince Shembo LB
ROUND 5	PICK 147	Ricardo Allen CB
ROUND 5	PICK 168	Marquis Spruill LB
ROUND 7	PICK 253	Yawin Smallwood LB
ROUND 7	PICK 255	Tyler Starr LB

and he wrapped up a career at Syracuse that featured a total of 243 tackles and 43 tackles for loss.

In the seventh round, Smallwood was selected with Atlanta's compensator pick and, like Shembo, is a very versatile linebacker with the ability to rush the passer. Smallwood was a tackling machine at UConn and finished his career with 332 total tackles, 27 tackles for loss, 8.5 sacks and five forced fumbles.

Atlanta's final selection at pick No. 255 is another defender that came in with a lot to offer on the defensive side of the football. Starr has great size at 6-foot-4, 250-pounds and is another playmaker the coaching staff was able to move around and see which position suited his skillset the best. Starr played his college football at South Dakota and set a school record with 27 career sacks while adding 13 forced fumbles. Starr's most valuable skill is his ability to run with tight ends in coverage and, if he continues to prove his ability to do so, he will find a role on the defense.

DRAFT SYNOPSIS

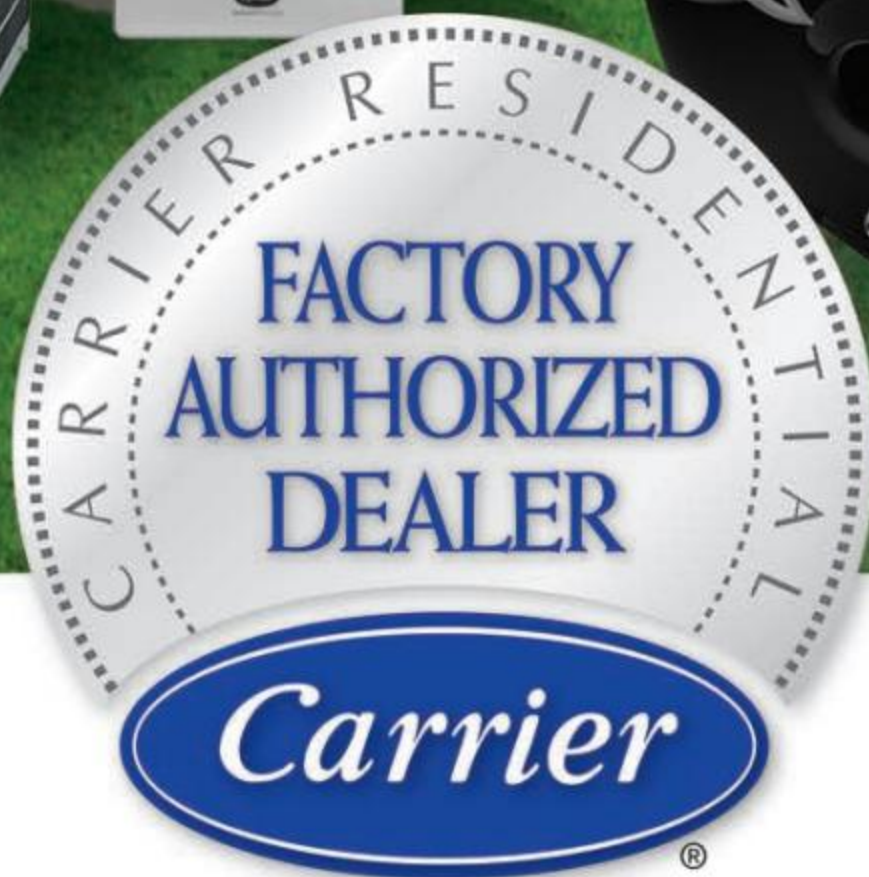
The Falcons had an agenda in this year's draft to find a centerpiece on the offensive line, a capable ball carrier that can be an every down back and depth and stability on the defensive side of the ball. Matthews fulfills that role on the offensive line and Freeman fits the bill at running back. Matthews and Freeman were instant impacts this offseason and Freeman has impressed the likes of Steven Jackson with his work ethic each day on the field and in the film room.

On defense, the Falcons played the most rookies in the NFL a season ago and adding more young talent and depth was a great way for this team to continue securing a bright future on that side of the ball. While this year's incoming class learns the professional game, it has had those same rookies that stepped up last year helping them just months after they went through the same process. This incoming class worked in a physical and competitive environment from Day 1 of rookie mini-camp and has shown an all-business attitude throughout the journey to the regular season. ///



Devonta Freeman

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Free Agents

By Craig Sager II, Ricky Dimon & Stephen Black

Jon Asamoah

Falcons add beef, playmakers during free agency



**JAVIER
ARENAS**

#28 | 5-9 | 197

COLLEGE: ALABAMA

EXPERIENCE: 5 YEARS

The NFL's free agency period was just week old when the Falcons signed their eighth free agent of the offseason by picking up Javier Arenas from the Arizona Cardinals.

The cornerback/return man brought back 24 kickoffs during the 2013 season for 493 yards and posted a career-best 21.4 yards per return. On defense, the former Alabama standout and 2010 second round pick has played in 63 games over his career, while recording 148 tackles, five sacks, three forced fumbles, two interceptions, two fumble recoveries and 22 passes defended in just 12 starts.

While weighing his options during

free-agency, the 26-year-old looked for a team that would not only give him a chance to compete for a starting job, but also would give him that opportunity in a variety of roles.

"As a player, you want to be on a team where you have the best chance to get on the field and help the football club," said Arenas. "Especially when those roles are in something you're comfortable with. I felt like Atlanta was the place for me."

In college, Arenas became the first player to ever amass more than 1,500 punt return yards and 2,000 kickoff return yards in a career. He was a senior when Julio Jones was a sophomore during the Tide's 2010 BCS National Title.

At the professional level, Arenas has been tested a lot as a defensive back and he's proven to have starting caliber talent. In Atlanta, Arenas joined the team in the midst of an intense position battle at cornerback and his experience has helped push others while giving himself a shot at the job.

"It's a great competition at cornerback right now," said Arenas during OTA's. "We respect

each other and come out here to work everyday and push each other. We all play the position very well and we're all familiar with the position." Defensive Coordinator Mike Nolan put Arenas in various situations this offseason and the 5-foot-9 playmaker was able to showcase what he brings to the table. Arenas has a knack for making plays and his natural ability at the position matches well with Nolan's precise approach to the schemes and techniques.

"Coach Nolan is very detail oriented coach," said Arenas. "Things like getting your hands on people and not allowing plays that you should not allow are always going to be brought up. If you have inside technique, don't let the guy get inside. It is as simple as that and he's going to nail that into you and make sure that it happens."

The Falcons will have a proven playmaker with Arenas that can return kicks and serve a very important role on defense. Every snap he takes this season, we'll know he earned it considering the stiff competition he faced.



**JON
ASAMOAH**

#75 | 6-4 | 305

COLLEGE: ILLINOIS

EXPERIENCE: 5 YEARS

The Falcons set out to bulk up the offensive line this offseason and the first move they made was bringing in big guard Jon Asamoah on Day 1 of free agency (on March 11). The 6-foot-4, 305-pound guard was a third round pick in 2010 and played in Kansas City for the past four years, helping the team finish among the League's best in rushing offense. Asamoah is a proven starter at right guard and a proven finisher in the run game.

"Every offensive lineman I know loves to run the ball," said Asamoah during mini-camp. "There's nothing better than when you're running it and stuffing it down their face and you

know they can't stop you. There's no better feeling I've experienced. It's one of those things you've got to take pride in. You've got to make the runs early in the game and make them go so we can keep calling it."

Asamoah has the size, strength and experience that gave the Falcons enough confidence to put him directly into the starting role. The former Illinois lineman took over the right guard position and has showcased his leadership qualities while manning the position next to rookie right tackle Jake Matthews.

"Rookies are rookies," Asamoah said on playing next to Matthews. "They haven't been through it yet so they don't know what to expect. You try to give them advice, but it's up to them whether or not they want to take it. Jake is an amazing kid. It must be the football background, his temperament, he gets it. He's always open to everything. He's one of the brightest rookies I've ever seen."

When Asamoah was a rookie, he had time to put everything into perspective and spent that season on the depth chart behind six-time Pro

Bowl guard Brian Waters. The following year, the well-prepared Asamoah stepped in as a starter and got his first of 41 career starts. Asamoah helped the Chiefs offense post three straight top-15 rushing seasons, including fifth-place finish in 2012 with 149.7 yards rushing per game.

The five-year pro has experience in explosive offenses similar to Atlanta's up-tempo attack. While at Illinois, Asamoah blocked for an offense that gained 548 total yards against Fresno State, 476 yards against Cincinnati, 500 yards against Michigan and 548 yards against Illinois State his senior season. His run blocking always seems to stand out most and Asamoah helped the Illini offense post three different games with more than 300 yards rushing during his senior campaign.

Atlanta fell to last in the League in rushing last year and with a healthy backfield and a new bulldozer at right guard, the expectations are high with this year's rushing attack.



Harland Gunn, Jake Matthews, Gabe Carimi



GABE CARIMI

#68 | 6-7 | 316

COLLEGE: WISCONSIN

EXPERIENCE: 4 YEARS

The Atlanta Falcons focused on improving their offensive line this offseason, via both free agency and the draft. Among those joining the Falcons in the former fashion was Gabe Carimi, who should be in the prime of his career at 26-years old and with three NFL seasons under his belt.

Carimi was highly touted coming out of the University of Wisconsin, and why not? The Lake Forest, Ill. native won the Outland Trophy as the nation's top interior lineman following the 2010 college football season and he was an All-America selection as a senior. Carimi was selected in

the first round (29th overall) of the 2011 draft by the Chicago Bears.

"He probably ends up being a right tackle in this league, or at least that's where you project him," Bill Polian, vice chairman of the Indianapolis Colts, said prior to those draft-day festivities. "But he's a good, solid football player. He's a hardworking, blue-collar, knock 'em around guy. Run-blocking is his strong suit."

Carimi figures to challenge for the starting nod at right tackle or perhaps one of the guard spots in Atlanta. The 6-foot-7, 316-pounder has shifted both teams and positions during his brief tenure in the League. He lined up at right tackle and right guard for Chicago before being traded to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for a sixth-round pick prior to the 2013 campaign. A teammate of fellow Falcons offensive lineman Peter Konz at Wisconsin and of fellow new addition Devin Hester in Chicago, Carimi played in 18 games and made 16 starts during his two-year stint with the Bears. He moved to left guard in Tampa, making two starts at that post while appearing

in 14 games. In 218 snaps last year (91 of the pass-blocking variety), Carimi surrendered only one sack, no quarterback hits and just one quarterback hurry.

Offensive line coach Mike Tice, who was with Carimi in Chicago for the 2011 and 2012 campaigns, hopes the arrival of Carimi and several other incoming offensive linemen successfully revamps a much-maligned unit.

"The addition of Jon (Asamoah), the addition of Gabe and hopefully the growth of guys like (Ryan) Schraeder and (Lamar) Holmes and Joe Hawley taking that next step and Pete (Konz) becoming a better player, I think that makes you better," Tice told ESPN.com. "I think we've got a good group. I've looked at the offensive line and the offense as a whole as a fancy sports car. You know, the offensive line has to be the engine that lets the fancy rims and the paint job look good. So that's how we're going to approach it in our room. We're the engine and we have to be the ones that fuel all those great players we have in the skill positions, because we have a bunch of them."



DEVIN HESTER

#17 | 5-11 | 190

COLLEGE: MIAMI

EXPERIENCE: 9 YEARS

The Atlanta Falcons spent much of their offseason trying to toughen up and bolster the trenches, both on the offensive and defensive lines. However, they by no means entirely avoided the flashier skill positions. In fact, one week into free agency Atlanta signed one of the most electric home-run threats of all time in the NFL. General Manager Thomas Dimitroff inked veteran kick returner and receiver Devin Hester to a three-year deal this spring.

"Atlanta, at the end of the day, was the team that showed the most interest," Hester said in a

Q&A with the Atlanta Journal Constitution's D. Orlando Ledbetter. "It's a winning program. I looked at them as a team that I know is going to have a good season. Last year was a little downfall for these guys because injuries occurred. This is a playoff team without any injuries." Hester added that 2014 is "a big chance for us" and he plans on "making the playoffs and hopefully competing for the Super Bowl."

That is something Hester did with his former team, the Chicago Bears. Drafted out of the University of Miami in 2006, Hester promptly led Chicago to Super Bowl XLI, in which the rookie became the first player in history to return the opening kickoff of a Super Bowl for a touchdown (the Bears ultimately lost to Peyton Manning and the Indianapolis Colts). Hester also holds the record for most punt return touchdowns in NFL history with 13. Last year he tied the record for most return touchdowns (punt and kickoff combined) with his 19th such score.

As for his offensive exploits, the 31-year-old recorded 217 receptions for 2,807 yards and

14 touchdowns during his eight seasons in the Windy City. His most productive campaign at receiver came in 2009, when Hester hauled in 57 passes for 757 yards. The Riviera Beach, Fla. native does not expect to be used heavily on offense in Atlanta, but receivers coach Terry Robiskie definitely has some ideas.

"He's just got to come in and do things he's been doing for years; try to be as dominant as he's been (at punt returner) for his whole career," Robiskie told the team's website. "From the receiver standpoint, we've got to be creative enough to come up with a couple of ideas, hopefully get the ball in his hands and let him get outside and do some things with it. Maybe come up with some trick stuff and surprise some people. We're going to try to move him around and match him up on some people and hopefully see some mismatches, get him matched up on some guys so he can catch the ball, pull away and do some additional things with it."



TYSON JACKSON

#99 | 6-4 | 296

COLLEGE: LSU

EXPERIENCE: 6 YEARS

The Falcons wanted to beef up on both lines of scrimmage in the offseason. Tyson Jackson, a 6-foot-4, 296-pound defensive lineman fits in. Jackson will likely play the end position in the team's defensive scheme, but prides himself on being able to play anywhere along the defensive line.

"I consider myself a d-lineman," said Jackson of his skillset. "I don't put a d-end or d-tackle tag on me, I just call myself a d-lineman. I can play all along the defensive line."

At LSU, Jackson played end in a 4-3 defense that was consistently among the best units in college football. The Tigers won the 2007 BCS

national championship with the help of future pros like Jackson. The New Orleans native made the SEC All-Freshman team in 2005 and was named to the All-SEC team in 2006 and 2008. Following his successful tenure in Baton Rouge, Jackson was drafted by the Chiefs with the third overall pick of the 2008 draft.

Jackson started immediately in Kansas City and made the 2009 All-Rookie team after a season in which he made 38 tackles. He has increased his sack total the past three seasons from one to three and a career-high four in 2013.

In Atlanta, Jackson will team with veteran defensive lineman Jonathan Babineaux and fellow free-agent acquisition Paul Soliai up front. With Soliai manning the nose guard position, this becomes one of the top lines in the NFC. The scheme allows pass rushers Osi Umenyiora, Kroy Biermann, Jonathan Massaquoi and Stanley Maponga to move around and use their best skills to their advantage. The Falcons front seven is now one of the most physical and talented they have had in years.

"We were focused on adding pieces along

our offensive and defensive lines and I feel we were able to accomplish that," General Manager Thomas Dimitroff said. "We believe that Paul and Tyson will add stoutness and grittiness to our defensive front and will help in the run game."

Jackson mentioned that some slight changes in the scheme in Kansas City helped him improve his game last year.

"In the transition from college to the pros, it takes time to learn the defenses," Jackson said. "It takes some time to understand the adjustments and learn your assignments, but once you get that down pat, it's smooth sailing from there. And I feel like right now, I'm at a point in my career that I've mastered the technique and I'm dominant at my position."

That is certainly music to the Falcons ears, as getting tougher up front on defense was necessary after a year in which injuries mounted and inexperienced backups had to step in for significant minutes. With Jackson in the fold along with seven draftees and multiple other free-agent signings on the defensive side of the ball, Atlanta looks like it has a solid nucleus in 2014.



DWIGHT LOWERY

#20 | 5-11 | 212

COLLEGE: SAN JOSE STATE

EXPERIENCE: 6 YEARS

Atlanta's overhaul in the offseason included the release of safety Thomas DeCoud and the April signing of Lowery, who had previously been with Jacksonville.

Lowery has loose ties to Falcons General Manager Thomas Dimitroff from Lowery's days at San Jose State while Dimitroff was the Patriots director of college scouting from 2003 through 2007.

The front office mastermind certainly had to like what he saw from Lowery in college. After playing two years of junior-college ball (he had

13 interceptions in less than two full seasons), Lowery transferred to San Jose State and did not miss a beat in production despite the spike in competition. The Santa Cruz, Calif. native led the nation with nine interceptions in 2006 and he bagged four more as a senior while being named to the All-WAC team. He also picked off two passes in the East-West Shrine Game before being selected in the fourth round of the 2008 NFL Draft by the Jets.

As a rookie in 2008, Lowery appeared in all 16 games for the Jets and made 54 solo tackles, 10 assists, forced five fumbles and had 16 passes defended (all still career-highs). He picked off three passes in both 2009 and 2010 (career-highs) and had at least one interception in each of his first five seasons.

"As I progress throughout my career, I've played pretty much every defensive back position so you get to learn the responsibilities of all the other players," Lowery told atlantafalcons.

com. "When you play safety, a position that's more back and has to understand the whole picture, it's easier to because I've been in those different spots."

Free safety could be Lowery's most likely destination. It's a spot for which he is battling rookie Dezmen Southward and would put either one next to strong safety William Moore. Lowery has been working with the first-team defense at free safety during organized team activities and by all accounts has been performing well and looking comfortable in a new system.

"We want him to compete for a starting job," Head Coach Mike Smith said of Lowery in a recent interview at Flowery Branch. "We want all of our guys to have that mindset. Dwight is an experienced player (with) a lot of games under his belt. Dez...we like his skill-set. He can run. He just has to learn the system."



TIM DOBBINS

#52 | 6-1 | 234

COLLEGE: IOWA STATE

EXPERIENCE: 9 YEARS

On the same day that Atlanta traded for Houston quarterback T.J. Yates, it also signed former Texans veteran linebacker Tim Dobbins to a one-year contract. In June, the Falcons suddenly found themselves in the market for a linebacker after a season-ending Achilles injury to Sean Weatherspoon. Enter Dobbins, who comes with plenty of experience. The former Iowa State Cyclone has spent eight years in the NFL and in seven of those seasons, he has played in at least 14 games. His first four years in the League came

in San Diego, where he started eight games in 2008 and recorded a career-high 46 tackles. He made a total of 10 starts during his tenure as a Charger before heading to Miami in 2010. With the Dolphins, Dobbins played under current Falcons Defensive Coordinator Mike Nolan. The Nashville, Tenn. native spent the past three NFL campaigns in Houston, where he enjoyed his best showing for the Texans in 2012. That year, Dobbins started six of his 14 games played while making 30 solo tackles and also contributing 13 assists, four passes defended, one interception and four fumble recoveries. Dobbins appeared in just three games last year in part due to a hamstring injury before being released in October.

Dobbins, 31, stands 6-foot-1 and 234 pounds. He was a fifth-round pick in the 2005 NFL Draft, landing in San Diego after two years at Iowa State following a stint in junior college. For the Cyclones, Dobbins started every game he played (24) in 2004 and 2005, all at middle linebacker.

He racked up 164 tackles (80 solo, 11 for loss), 1.5 sacks, one forced fumble, one fumble recovery, a blocked kick and three interceptions.

Although he does not figure to be a starter in the Falcons defense, Dobbins should at least compete for playing time and is likely to be a significant special-teams contributor. Even with Weatherspoon, Atlanta was already set to be dealing with an inexperienced linebacker corps that last year featured Joplo Bartu, Akeem Dent and Paul Worrilow. Dent was shipped off to Houston in the deal for Yates. Now that Dent and Weatherspoon (the latter at least temporarily) are gone, Dobbins is the only linebacker on the Falcons active roster with more than two years of experience in the NFL. The competition for the backup job at inside linebacker could be a hot one between Dobbins, Marquis Spruill and Yawin Smallwood.



Devin Hester



PAUL SOLIAI

#96 | 6-4 | 340

COLLEGE: UTAH

EXPERIENCE: 8 YEARS

Defensive Coordinator Mike Nolan knows Paul Soliai well after their days together with the Miami Dolphins. To Nolan, the nose tackle position is one of the key players in his defense. With that in mind, General Manager Thomas Dimitroff went out and grabbed Paul Soliai, a 6-foot-4, 340-pound boulder of a man.

While stats don't typically tell the whole story for players at his position, Soliai's work gained attention when he made the 2011 Pro Bowl and was given the Dolphins franchise tag

prior to the 2011 season.

A seven-year vet, Soliai was a Dolphin his entire career. Nolan was his coordinator in Miami from 2010-2011 and the pair worked great together. Not only does the big Samoan know Nolan's defensive scheme, he excels at it.

With Soliai on the squad, Falcons veteran defensive lineman Jonathan Babineaux can now play end, a more natural fit for his size and skill-set than the nose tackle position, which calls for someone take consistently take double teams. It is a job Soliai enjoys.

"I'm excited," said the former Utah Ute of his role with the Falcons. "A lot of people don't recognize my position. I take a lot of (double-teams) and free other guys for single blocks so they can make plays. Something I (take) pride in is stopping the run."

Stopping the run is key for the Falcons defense this season as the unit finished 31st in the NFL last season. A lot of that burden will be on Soliai, who heads the front seven.

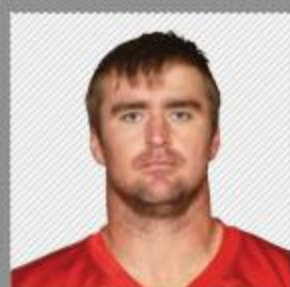
In addition to being a standout football player, Soliai grew up excelling in other sports as well.

"I get my toughness from rugby," the former fourth-round pick said. "I'm a big rugby player, I used to play volleyball. I just like playing games for fun."

An intangible Soliai brings to Atlanta is his familiarity with Nolan and both his schemes. Last year, Atlanta rotated between the 4-3 and 3-4 and had plenty of multiple looks.

"He played in this defense a couple years back in Miami and he's able to help me transition a little bit faster than I was expecting," Falcons defensive end Tyson Jackson said of Soliai. "I'm relying on that guy a lot, because he's played in this League for a long time."

A native of southern California, Soliai moved to American Samoa prior to his senior year of high school. Soliai played college ball at Coffeyville Community College in Kansas before transferring to the University of Utah.



BEAR PASCOE

#86 | 6-5 | 265

COLLEGE: FRESNO STATE

EXPERIENCE: 6 YEARS

Mckenna Sean Pascoe is more than just a player with a fun nickname, "Bear." He is a tight end who brings sorely-needed starting experience to the Falcons in the wake of future Hall of Famer Tony Gonzalez's retirement. Gonzalez spent his last five NFL seasons in Atlanta and played in every single game during that stretch. He caught at least 70 passes and was targeted at least 111 times in each one of those seasons. Gonzalez exceeded 800 receiving yards on four of five occasions and his red-zone prowess saw him snag 35 total touchdowns. Needless to say, there is

suddenly a void at that position in Atlanta that cannot be filled by one single person. The task is falling upon Pascoe and Levine Toilolo, who was drafted by the Falcons in the fourth round of the 2013 NFL Draft.

A five-year veteran, Pascoe signed with the Falcons as a free agent on May 1. He spent each of his first five seasons in the league with the New York Giants after being selected by that franchise in the sixth round of the 2009 draft. He has played in 66 career games while making 32 starts. He has 38 receptions for 333 yards and he recorded his lone touchdown catch during the 2012 campaign. Pascoe matched his career-high mark for single-season receptions in 2013 with 12, which he turned into 81 yards (he had a best-ever 136 yards on 12 catches in 2011). He was undeniably a key contributor in New York even without frequently showing up in the box score. He played in all 16 games last season while making six starts. Pascoe also brings championship experience to Atlanta, having won Super Bowl XLVI with the Giants.

"I am very excited to be joining the Atlanta Falcons team and family," Pascoe posted on his Twitter account (@BearPascoe) the day of the signing. "Thank you to dirty bird nation for the warm welcome. @Atlanta_Falcons".

Pascoe will be an especially welcomed addition for quarterback Matt Ryan. As his statistics suggest, the Bakersfield, Calif. native is more of a blocker than a pass-catcher. He has impressive size at 6-foot-5 and 265 pounds but also showcases quick feet, a combination that makes him a force on the offensive line. Offensive Coordinator Dirk Koetter is no stranger to two tight-end sets and he is likely to implement such a formation more than a few times this season, with Toilolo more of a receiving option and Pascoe used primarily for protection.

Selected by San Francisco in the sixth round of the 2009 NFL Draft, Pascoe played collegiately at Fresno State. He was a two-time All-WAC performer and he holds the school's all-time record with a whopping six blocked field goals.



JOSH WILSON

#26 | 5-9 | 188

COLLEGE: MARYLAND

EXPERIENCE: 8 YEARS

Wilson is coming off a three-year stint with Washington, where he played in all 48 games during his tenure. His best season of his eight-year NFL career came in 2013, when he set career-highs in total tackles (93), solo tackles (68), assists (25), sacks (two) and fumble recoveries (three). Wilson also forced two fumbles and picked off a pass in the Week 17 finale against NFC East rival New York. He has now recorded at least one interception in seven consecutive sea-

sons, including four in 2008 with the Seahawks and three in 2010 with the Ravens. He snagged multiple interceptions every year between 2008 and 2012.

The Houston, Texas native starred in both football and track in high school before attending the University of Maryland. In 46 games spanning four years at Maryland, Wilson made 28 starts and wrapped up his college career with 157 tackles (100 of the solo variety), four sacks, two interceptions, two forced fumbles, two fumble recoveries and 31 kickoff returns for 847 yards (27.3 yards per return) while scoring two touchdowns (one fumble return, one kickoff return). He was selected by Seattle in the second round (55th overall) of the 2007 NFL Draft.

Wilson does not figure to be in the special-teams mix with Devin Hester in Atlanta, but he does have experience in the return game and could step in if Hester ever goes down with an injury. For three seasons in Seattle (2007-

2009), Wilson returned kickoffs. In 2008 alone, he had 69 attempts for 1,753 yards. More importantly, the veteran brings experience to the secondary and will provide depth at the cornerback position. He is also expected to be locked in one of training camp's most intense battles for the starting nickel cornerback job. Javier Arenas and Robert McClain are the other serious contenders. Wilson may not be ideally-suited for nickelback, so Arenas and McClain have to be considered the favorites. Either way, the veteran is sure to see significant playing time in various parts of the secondary. He is too good—especially in pass coverage and with his nose for the football—not to be a major contributor.

"It's going to be a competition this year," McClain told the team's website. "[The Falcons have] brought in guys that can play the same position as me, but it's like that every year. Every year there's competition."



T.J. YATES

#8 | 6-4 | 217

COLLEGE: NORTH CAROLINA

EXPERIENCE: 4 YEARS

Yates is a Marietta, Ga. native and former Pope High School standout. After graduating from Pope in 2006, he took his talents to the University of North Carolina. Yates spent five years at Chapel Hill (he redshirted in 2006) and his career as a four-year starter saw him set school records for total passing yards, single-season passing yards and single-season total offense. Now he is back in Atlanta after the Falcons swung a deal with Houston to acquire the backup quarterback last month.

"It was awesome news," Yates told the

Atlanta Journal Constitution's D. Orlando Ledbetter, while explaining that he heard about the trade during dinner at Chipotle. "It was great news for me and my wife. We get to go home and be around our families; go to a great organization. Man, I couldn't be happier or more excited about going to the Falcons. ... I'm ready to come in and do whatever I can to help this team out. Whether it's the No. 2 or whatever. I'm coming in to do whatever I can to make this team better and help this team win. I'm excited for the opportunity. I can't tell you how happy me and my family were when I found out I was coming back home."

The Falcons will be happy to have Yates back home, as well, in part because it ensures they will not have to go up against him. That happened once, in a Dec. 4, 2011 contest, and it did not end well for Atlanta. In what was Yates' first-ever NFL start, in fact, the Texans beat the Falcons 17-10. He completed 12 of 25 passes for 188 yards and one touchdown without throwing

an interception. Yates propelled Houston to a quick 10-0 lead then—after the Falcons had tied the game—engineered a 19-play, 85-yard touchdown drive taking up more than 10 minutes of play from late in the third quarter through the midpoint of the fourth quarter that provided for the winning margin.

For his three-year NFL career, Yates has appeared in 13 games and has completed 101 of 166 attempts for 1,100 yards to go along with three touchdowns and six interceptions. Like Ryan, Yates is a prototypical dropback passer with good size (6-foot-4) and limited scrambling ability. He also comes with plenty of experience, especially compared to other signal-callers on the Falcons' roster not named Ryan. Yates will obviously not be Atlanta's starter, barring injury to Ryan. He does, however, figure to be the undisputed No. 2 quarterback behind Ryan. Dominique Davis was released by the Falcons and former Duke star Sean Renfree looks to battle Jeff Mathews, a rookie out of Cornell, for the No. 3 job. ///



Josh Wilson



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NFL Legacy

By Craig Sager II

Jake Matthews is the latest in a long line of outstanding NFL players from his family to graduate to the pro ranks

The Falcons drafted Texas A&M offensive tackle Jake Matthews with the No. 6 pick of this year's draft and the 6-foot-5 rookie is slated to make an immediate impact this season at right tackle. Matthews faces the challenge of being a rookie starter but he has both the resume and football pedigree to adapt quickly and thrive on this stage.

FAMILY TRADITION

Professional football is a familiar lifestyle to Matthews, who was raised by his mother, Carrie, and his father, Bruce, a Class of 2007 NFL Hall of Famer. While the Manning family has the quarterback position covered with father, Archie, and sons Peyton and Eli, the Matthews' rich football pedigree occupies both sides of the football and has now sent seven family members to the pros.

Bruce's Hall of Fame career earned him 14 Pro Bowl appearances at guard and helped Jake get a head start at an early age.

"I've learned a lot from my family's football pedigree," said Matthews. "From day one, I kind of had a second offensive line coach in my father. Not only a great football player, but a Hall of Famer. Always being able to come home and talk to him and get his opinion was something I always took advantage of because, in my opinion, he's the greatest offensive lineman ever to play the game. I'll be happy to do half the things he's done because he was such a great player. He's someone I really look up to and I'm real proud to call him my dad."

Bruce grew up in a similar childhood situation as Jake by learning the game from his father, Clay Matthews Sr., who was an offensive tackle at Georgia Tech and with the San Francisco 49ers. Bruce's brother and Jake's uncle, Clay Matthews Jr. played on the defensive side of the football

and was the No. 12 pick in the 1978 draft. Clay Jr. played linebacker in the NFL for 19 seasons with stays in Cleveland and Atlanta while earning four trips to the Pro Bowl and tallying career totals of 1,561 tackles and 69.5 sacks.

Jake's cousin is none other than Clay Matthews III, Green Bay's long-haired, muscle-flexing outside linebacker. Matthews III has four Pro Bowl trips in his five NFL seasons and was named NFC Defensive player of the Year in 2010 during Green Bay's Super Bowl season. The younger brother of Matthews III is Casey Matthews, who plays linebacker for the Philadelphia Eagles.

An exciting wrinkle in the 2014 season would be the possible Matthews matchup with the two cousins on opposite sides of the football. The Falcons play at Green Bay on Dec. 8 and Jake could get the chance to go up against his cousin, who has 50 sacks and 186 total tackles in his five seasons on the Packers' defense.

"I'm fired up," said Jake about what it would be like to face his cousin this season. "I talked to my dad; some of his greatest memories was him going against his brothers. I finally get an opportunity to play against my cousin [Clay Matthews III]. He's an All-Pro and a stud. It's going to be a huge challenge, but I'm looking forward to it. I know that's the reason why Atlanta picked me. They think I'm a guy that can go in and take care of the quarterback, take care of Matt Ryan, and I'm going to go in and prove that I can."

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

With the amount of success carried with the Matthews name, Jake might have the highest expectations of all as he enters the 2014 season. He's the earliest pick out of the seven Matthews that have made their way to the NFL. He's also just the second offensive lineman drafted

by the Falcons in the first round in the past 22 years. Not to mention the fact that he's had NFL potential and a target on his back since his prep days as an All-American lineman at Elkins High School in Missouri City, Texas.

In the midst of all the pressure, Matthews has navigated his way to the pros with maturity and a range of skills that have been perfected over the years. During his freshman season with the Aggies, Matthews took over the starting tackle role when Brian Thomas shifted inside to fill in for injuries. A&M allowed just 14 sacks in the final seven games of the season after surrendering 23 in the first half. Matthews' play earned him All-Big 12 freshman honors and he was named honorable mention on the All-Big 12 team.

Heading into his sophomore season, Jake had already established himself as a cornerstone of the Aggies' offensive front. The group





went on to allow just nine sacks in 13 games that season and set school records for total offense, passing offense and scoring offense which averaged 490.2 yards per game. By Matthews' junior season, the Aggies' offense was clicking on all cylinders and Jake adapted to the mobility and improvisation of then-freshman quarterback Johnny Manziel. Matthews earned first-team All-American honors and Manziel became the first freshman to win the Heisman Trophy. The Aggies led the SEC in rushing, passing, scoring and total offense and ranked third nationally in total offense and scoring offense with Matthews anchoring the line.

Matthews' final two seasons at the collegiate level is where he believes he developed the most and became the player he is today.

"I'm a strong believer that the SEC is the best conference in college football and going against all those top players week in and week out is something that really developed my game, especially that junior and senior year," admitted Matthews. "I really felt like I developed the most and became the player I am today. I think it is going to give me a little more experience going into the next level, but I can't keep saying how much the change is going to be. I'm going to be blocking the best players in the world, like I keep saying. I'm just excited for the opportunity. I know I'm going to do well if I go in and keep that same mindset and do things the right way and work hard."

Matthews will line up at right tackle adjacent to veteran guard Jon Asamoah, who was signed this offseason from Kansas City in free agency. The duo has adapted quick and looks to be a force on the right side together.

"It's a good blend of experience with Jon," said Falcons Head Coach Mike Smith. "Jake is just such an advanced guy for somebody coming out of college. It's a good start and they've learned how to play together."

The Falcons have a new offensive line coach in Mike Tice, a free-agent pick-up starting at guard with Asamoah and a rookie tackle with Jake heading into the season, but there is plenty of reason to believe this will be a talented front. Communication is the recipe Offensive Coordinator Dirk Koetter is calling for and he believes the rest will take care of itself.

"Communication is always important and especially important when you have a new o-line coach and a first-round draft pick tackle and a free-agent guard," said Koetter. "I think Coach Tice has done a great job of coming in and laying down his expectations for the o-linemen and I think those guys have been very open to listening to what he has to say and the changes that we want to make. Now we just have to continue the process until we get to the season."

PREPARING FOR SUCCESS

The routines and processes of preparing for the season is something Matthews established from the start of rookie mini-camp.

"Jake is everything we anticipated he's going to be," Smith said after Day 1 of rookie mini-camp. "Jake is very mature not only physically, but mentally in terms of understanding what it takes to be an NFL player and I like the way he moved today."

Establishing a leadership role on the team has been just as much a part of Matthews' practice schedule as the plays themselves. As the

top pick, Matthews was the tone setter with the rookie class and a hard-fought set of drills with second-round pick (No. 37), defensive tackle Ra'Shede Hageman did just that.

Matthews took on Hageman under the watchful eye of Tice and the rookies went at it for a best-of-three where Matthews was able to stand his ground. Hageman spoke after the first practice about how much better he'll get going against Jake and competing against a rookie with such a mature skillset.

"We get after it and that's the big thing I've taken away from this group," said Matthews. "These guys love to work."

The Falcons, who face a challenging 2014 schedule and looked to add toughness and depth to both lines of scrimmage, appear to have done that with the addition of Matthews, Hageman and several free-agent linemen.

The current offensive line has been in the top 10 in fewest sacks allowed in five of the last six seasons. In addition to buying time for Atlanta's potent aerial offense, Matthews will be asked to improve the Falcons rushing attack and help create a balanced offensive attack.

"I definitely wouldn't consider myself strictly a pass blocker," said Matthews. "I take a lot of pride in being good at run blocking and pass blocking. Obviously, I'm going to need to improve in both of those coming up to this next level. I'm going to be playing against the best players in the world, so I am excited for the opportunity and excited for the challenge." ///





JAKE MATTHEWS FAMILY TREE



FIRST GENERATION

GREAT GRANDFATHER
Howard Lynn Matthews (1889-1975)

"Matty", as he was called by friends, was the first line of athletes in the Matthews bloodline. While he never played in the NFL, Matty was a minor league baseball player and boxing, baseball and track coach at The Citadel. He joined the army during World War I, began boxing and was inducted in the Carolinas Boxing Hall of Fame in 2005. Following the war, he returned to baseball while also working as a stock market telegrapher. After a couple years in the business, he began his coaching career.

SECOND GENERATION

Clay Matthews Jr.

Bruce Matthews

GRANDFATHER
Clay Matthews Sr.
(born 1928)

NFL Experience: Offensive Tackle, San Francisco 49ers (1950, 1953-1955)

Matthews Sr. played his college football at Georgia Tech and was drafted by the St. Louis Rams in the 1949 NFL Draft. Matthews Sr. was sent to the San Francisco 49ers and played four seasons before the Korean War interrupted his career. Following the war, he returned to San Francisco for three more seasons. After football, Clay Sr. had a successful business career, culminating in the 1980s as the president of Pertec Peripherals Corporation of Chatsworth, Calif. The company manufactured magnetic tape and disk drives for computers.

THIRD GENERATION

Clay Matthews III

Casey Matthews

Kyle Matthews

Brodie Matthews

UNCLE
Clay Matthews Jr.
(born 1956)

NFL Experience: Linebacker, Cleveland Browns (1978-1993), Atlanta Falcons (1994-96)

Matthews Jr. played his college football at USC and was the 12th overall pick in the 1978 Draft. The four-time All-Pro linebacker put together an outstanding 19-year career that included 278 games. Matthews Jr. was inducted into the USC Hall of Fame in 2005 and in 2014 was named Director of Football Operations at Carter High School in Tennessee.

Kevin Matthews

Jake Matthews

Mike Matthews

FATHER
Bruce Matthews
(born 1961)

NFL Experience: Offensive Guard, Houston Oilers/Tennessee Oilers/Titans (1983-2001)

Bruce is the father of Falcons rookie Jake Matthews and is the only member of the family inducted in the NFL Hall of Fame. Bruce finished his career at USC and went No. 9 in the 1983 Draft. Bruce's career included 14 Pro Bowls, 10 All-Pro selections. The longevity of his career was remarkable and he made the NFL 1990's all decade team and was named NFL Alumni Offensive Lineman of the Year in 2000, his 17th NFL season. Matthews' No. 74 is retired by the Titans and he still holds the NFL record for most games played by an offensive lineman at 296.

FOURTH GENERATION

COUSIN
Clay Matthews III (born 1986)

NFL Experience: Outside Linebacker, Green Bay Packers (2009-present)

Matthews was a walk-on at USC that worked his way into the starting role before wrapping up a college career good enough to get him picked at No. 26 overall in the 2009 NFL Draft. Matthews won Super Bowl XLV with the Packers and has four Pro Bowl appearances in his five-year career. In 2010, he earned NFC Defensive Player of the Year.

COUSIN
Casey Matthews (born 1989)

NFL Experience: Linebacker, Philadelphia Eagles (2011-present)

Matthews played his college ball at Oregon and was drafted in the fourth round by the Eagles in the 2011 Draft. He finished his college career as a first-team All-Pac 10 selection in 2010 and recorded 49 tackles in his NFL action.

COUSIN
Kyle Matthews (born 1982)

Safety: USC (2000-03)

Matthews carried on the Trojan tradition and followed in his father and uncles footsteps at USC. Kyle played for Paul Hackett his first year at the school and was introduced to new head coach Pete Carroll for the 2001 season. The Trojans went 12-1 Kyle's senior season and the result was a controversial split national championship with LSU.

BROTHER
Kevin Matthews (born 1987)

NFL Experience: Center, Tennessee Titans (2010-2013) *Currently a free agent

Kevin grew up in Missouri City, Texas with his younger brother Jake and attended Texas A&M. He went undrafted following his career, but worked his way onto the Titans' roster for the 2010 season. Matthews saw action in 17 games and has three career NFL starts.

BROTHER
Mike Matthews (born 1994)

Center: Texas A&M

Mike has followed in his family's footsteps and has NFL potential as he enters his senior season with the Aggies. This May, Matthews was named to the Rimington Trophy watch list for the upcoming season, an award that is given to the most outstanding center in the nation. Matthews started all 13 games last season and helped the Aggies lead the SEC in passing offense with 353.3 yards per game and points with 42.2 per game. Ten of the team's games last season saw 600 or more yards of total offense.

FIFTH GENERATION

SECOND COUSIN
Brodie Matthews (born 2010)

Position: TBD

Brodie Matthews is the son of Kyle Matthews and was born in November of 2010. He is the first representative of the newest generation of the Matthews family



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Falcons Opponents

By Stephen Black

A look at the teams on the Birds' 2014 slate



MIAMI DOLPHINS | 8-8 IN 2013

**PRESEASON
HOME AUG. 8**

SERIES

**Miami leads 8-4 in regular
season meetings**

LAST MEETING

2013 - Miami won 27-23

STADIUM

Sun Life (76,100)

The Dolphins made several major changes in the offseason, both in the front office and on the sidelines. Miami hired Dennis Hickey as its general manager and Bill Lazor as offensive coordinator. Knowshon Moreno was brought in to run the ball and the 'Phins drafted two offensive tackles in their first three picks in the draft. Wide receiver Jarvis Landry was selected in the second round. Feisty cornerback Courtland Finnegan should start in his first season in Miami.

After making the postseason 21 times between 1970 and 2001, the Dolphins have made the playoffs just once since and have one winning season since 2005. Miami and Atlanta have met in the preseason 12 times with each team taking six games. It will be the fourth time in the past five seasons the franchises have played during the preseason. Last season in south Florida, the Dolphins scored 17 of the game's final 20 points, including the game-winning pass from Ryan Tannehill to Dion Sims to edge Atlanta in the 2013 regular season.



HOUSTON TEXANS | 2-14 IN 2013

**PRESEASON
AWAY AUG. 16**

SERIES

**Houston leads 2-1 in regular
season meetings**

LAST MEETING

2011 - Houston won 17-10

STADIUM

NRG (71,500)

The Texans fired coach Gary Kubiak 13 games into the 2013 season and tabbed coaching veteran Wade Phillips to replace him. After the 2-14 season ended, the Texans replaced the entire coaching staff and hired former Penn State coach Bill O'Brien as their new head man. Former Browns and Chiefs coach Romeo Crennel was brought in to lead the defense. With the first pick in the draft, Houston selected Jadeveon Clowney, who will pair with J.J. Watt on what could be one of the top pass rushing teams in the League. Former Bills starter Ryan Fitzpatrick will start at quarterback.

This preseason meeting will be the first between the two franchises. Atlanta has met the Texans just three times on the gridiron with Houston winning both games that were played in Reliant Stadium. The Texans triumphed 17-10 in 2011 after Marietta native T.J. Yates led Houston to the game-winning score with just over six minutes left. Yates joined Atlanta during the offseason in a trade that sent linebacker Akeem Dent to Houston.



TENNESSEE TITANS | 7-9 IN 2013

**PRESEASON
HOME AUG. 23**

SERIES

Tennessee leads 3-1 in regular season meetings

LAST MEETING

2011 - Falcons won 23-17

STADIUM

LP Field (68,798)

The Titans hired coach Ken Whisenhunt in the offseason after parting ways with Mike Munchak. At his last stop as a head coach, Whisenhunt led the Cardinals to their only Super Bowl appearance in franchise history. As offensive coordinator in Pittsburgh, Whisenhunt helped guide the Steelers to a Super Bowl championship in 2005. Last year, Whisenhunt served as offensive coordinator in San Diego.

In the offseason, Tennessee dropped longtime running back Chris Johnson and will look to Shonn Greene and Dexter McCluster to run the ball. Quarterback Jake Locker will work with a solid receiving corps, led by Kendall Wright and Nate Washington. The defense was middle of the road last season in total defense.

Atlanta has played the Titans franchise a total of 13 times, a number that includes nine games when the club was known as the Houston Oilers. The Falcons have met Tennessee six times in preseason action since it relocated to Nashville. Atlanta is 1-3 in four regular-season meetings with the Titans and was 5-4 against the Oilers.



JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS | 4-12 IN 2013

**PRESEASON
AWAY AUG. 28**

SERIES

Jacksonville leads 3-2 in regular season meetings

LAST MEETING

2011 - Falcons won 41-14

STADIUM

EverBank Field (67,164)

The Jaguars surprised many around the League last year by winning four games after some pundits predicted that Jacksonville would emerge from the 2013 season winless. However, the Jags ranked toward the bottom of the NFL in most statistical categories, including total offense (31st) and total defense (27th). The Jaguars signed running back Toby Gerhart to replace Maurice Jones-Drew, who signed a three-year deal with Oakland. Jacksonville's quarterback of the future appears to be former UCF star Blake Bortles, whom they drafted third overall.

Jacksonville has not had a winning season since 2007, which was also the last time the Jags made the postseason.

Regular combatants in the preseason, the Falcons have faced the Jags 10 times. This marks the fifth straight season the teams have played in the preseason. In 10 preseason meetings, the Jags hold a 7-3 edge. In regular-season action, the Falcons have won two of five meetings, including a 41-14 demolition of Jacksonville late in the 2011 campaign.



NEW ORLEANS SAINTS | 11-5 IN 2013

**HOME SEPT. 7
AWAY DEC. 21**

SERIES

Falcons lead 46-43

LAST MEETING

2013 - New Orleans won 17-13

STADIUM

Mercedes Benz Superdome (72,003)

The Falcons will open the season at home against with New Orleans for the first time since 1981, when Atlanta triumphed 27-0. It is also the first time Atlanta has opened the season at home since 2009. The Falcons lead the all-time series with arch rival New Orleans 46-43 and lead the Saints 6-1 in season openers.

One of the more successful NFC teams in recent years, the Saints have made the playoffs in four of the last five seasons. Since Drew Brees arrived in 2006, New Orleans has been a contender in the NFC.

New Orleans supplemented its wide receiving corps by drafting Brandin Cooks with the No. 20 pick in the draft. The speedy playmaker gives Brees another quality option in the passing game. Running back Darren Sproles was traded to Philadelphia for a fifth-round pick, but Mark Ingram and Pierre Thomas provide two productive options in the running game. In the offseason, New Orleans also signed free safety Jairus Byrd and veteran cornerback Champ Bailey to help bolster the secondary.



CINCINNATI BENGALS | 11-5 IN 2013

AWAY SEPT. 14

SERIES

Cincinnati leads 7-5

LAST MEETING

2010 - Falcons won 39-32

STADIUM

Paul Brown (65,535)

Marvin Lewis has coached the Bengals to four playoff seasons in five years and has Cincinnati coming off an AFC North Division championship. The Bengals fared well at home in Paul Brown Stadium, winning all eight regular season games played there. However, San Diego came into town for the Wild Card game and came away with a 27-10 win. The Bengals have still not won a playoff game since 1990.

Cincinnati relies on a tough, physical defense that is led by tackle Geno Atkins, one of the League's top pass-rushers at his position. Andy Dalton quarterbacks the Bengals' offense, which relies upon the elite play of wide receiver A.J. Green and the running of BenJarvus Green-Ellis and Giovanni Bernard.

Atlanta last played in Cincy in 2006, a 29-27 Falcons win. The Bengals came to Atlanta during the 2010 season and watched as the Falcons came away with a 39-32 decision.

The Bengals drafted cornerback Darqueze Dennard out of Michigan State with the 24th overall pick, then took LSU running back Jeremy Hill in the second round.



TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS | 4-12 IN 2013

HOME SEPT. 18
AWAY NOV. 9

SERIES

Tampa Bay leads 21-20

LAST MEETING

2013 - Tampa Bay won 41-28

STADIUM

Raymond James (65,857)

The Greg Schiano era is over in Tampa Bay after two lackluster seasons and former Bears coach Lovie Smith was hired to replace him. Smith tabbed former Vikings Head Coach Leslie Frazier as defensive coordinator and long-time Cal coach Jeff Tedford to call the shots on offense. High-priced cornerback Darelle Revis was released and the Bucs traded receiver Mike Williams to Buffalo for a draft pick. Quarterback Josh McCown was brought in to compete with Mike Glennon for the starter's job.

The Bucs spent all six draft picks on offensive players, including No. 7 pick Mike Evans who caught passes from Johnny Manziel at Texas A&M.

NFC South rivals since 2002, the Falcons and Bucs have had a back-and-forth relationship throughout their rivalry. While Tampa took six straight from 1997 to 2003, Atlanta has won eight of the last 11. The series is knotted at 12 since 2002. The teams split two meetings in each of the past three seasons while Atlanta swept the series in 2009 and 2010.



MINNESOTA VIKINGS | 5-10-1 IN 2013

AWAY SEPT. 28

SERIES

Minnesota leads 16-11

LAST MEETING

2011 - Falcons win 24-14

STADIUM

TCF Bank (50,805)

Former Bengals and Falcons Defensive Coordinator Mike Zimmer was named head coach of the Vikings in January to replace Leslie Frazier. The Vikings have had losing seasons in three of the past four years, but have made the playoffs three times in six years. George Edwards is now Minnesota's defensive coordinator while NFL coaching mainstay Norv Turner was hired to guide the offense. This season will be Turner's 30th in the NFL coaching ranks.

The good news at quarterback is that the Vikings have three decent options there. The bad news is that none of them stand out. Christian Ponder had been the regular starter for three years before Matt Cassel took over for the second half of last season. If neither veteran works out, rookie Teddy Bridgewater will be given a shot.

One of the most memorable and important wins in Falcons history came in the 1998 season when the Birds beat Minnesota in the NFC Championship Game 30-27 in overtime on a Morten Andersen field goal. Atlanta trails the series 15-10, but has won five of the last eight meetings. The last game between the two came in 2011, a 24-14 win by the Falcons.



NEW YORK GIANTS | 7-9 IN 2013

AWAY OCT. 5

SERIES

Falcons lead 11-10

LAST MEETING

2012 - Falcons won 34-0

STADIUM

MetLife (82,566)

Two-time Super Bowl winner Tom Coughlin returns for his 11th season coaching the Giants, who have made the playoffs just once in the past five years (2011). Eli Manning has been Coughlin's starting quarterback since 2005 and has symbolically represented New York's up-and-down performance during that time period.

The Giants inked cornerback Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie to bolster the secondary and guard Geoff Schwartz to help repair a crumbling offensive line. Defensive linemen Justin Tuck and Linval Joseph, however, have each left New York after successful tenures with the Giants. First round pick Odell Beckham Jr. will attempt to replace Hakeem Nicks at wide receiver.

The Falcons skunked the G-Men 34-0 in 2012, the teams' last meeting. The series is tied 11-11 all time, although Atlanta has won five of the last seven on the road and seven of 10 on the Giants' home fields. In the aforementioned 2012 game, Atlanta's defense held Eli Manning to just 161 passing yards and nabbed two interceptions.



CHICAGO BEARS | 8-8 IN 2013

HOME OCT. 12

SERIES

Chicago leads 13-12

LAST MEETING

2011 - Chicago won 30-12

STADIUM

Soldier Field (61,500)

Year 2 of the Marc Trestman era will get underway this season with the Bears having made the playoffs just once in the past seven years. Quarterback Jay Cutler, who signed a new 7-year deal in the offseason, has risen above the negativity that surrounded him earlier in his career and now leads one of the more talented offenses in the NFL. Wide receivers Alshon Jeffrey and Brandon Marshall are a productive duo while running back Matt Forte returns after a season in which he finished second in the NFL in rushing.

In the offseason, the Bears signed veteran defensive ends Jared Allen and LaMarr Houston to boost a pass rush that finished last in the League with 31 sacks in 2013. Chicago drafted cornerback Kyle Fuller in the first round and took underrated running back Ka'Deem Carey in the fourth round.

Despite trailing the series 13-12, Atlanta has won two of the past three, including the past two at home. The Falcons are 7-5 all time against the Bears in Atlanta.



BALTIMORE RAVENS | 8-8 IN 2013

AWAY OCT. 19

SERIES

Tied 2-2

LAST MEETING

2010 - Falcons won 26-21

STADIUM

M&T Bank (71,008)

The Ravens were one of the top franchises in the NFL from 2008-2012 when they made the playoffs each year and won the 2012 Super Bowl. Last season, however, they missed the playoffs for the first time since 2007.

Baltimore went defense with its first three picks of this year's draft by taking linebacker C.J. Mosley, defensive tackle Timmy Jernigan and safety Terrence Brooks. Brooks will be paired with last year's first-round pick, Matt Elam. The biggest offseason signing was inking former Carolina Panther Steve Smith, who will add a veteran presence to the wide receiving corps. Former Texans head coach Gary Kubiak is the Ravens' new offensive coordinator.

Despite being in existence since 1996, the Ravens have played Atlanta just four times with each team taking two. The Falcons won the last meeting 26-21 in 2010 as Roddy White hauled in a 33-yard pass from Matt Ryan with just 20 seconds left.



DETROIT LIONS | 7-9 IN 2013

LONDON OCT. 26

SERIES

Detroit leads 23-12

LAST MEETING

2012 - Falcons won 31-18

STADIUM

Ford Field (65,000)

This year's game will be the first time the Falcons have traveled overseas to play a regular season game. The teams will butt heads in famous Wembley Stadium in London. It is the second time Detroit has played in London, the other being a 13-13 tie with Dallas during the 1993 season.

The Lions have had one winning season since 2000 and one playoff berth since 1999. A new coaching staff, led by Head Coach Jim Caldwell, will try to reverse the franchise's fortunes behind a high-octane passing attack. Teryl Austin is the team's defensive coordinator after serving as defensive backs coach for Baltimore last year. Joe Lombardi is the Lions' new offensive coordinator and Jim Bob Cooter will coach the quarterbacks. Detroit selected tight end Eric Ebron out of North Carolina with the No. 10 pick in the first round.

A regular non-division opponent for many years, the Falcons have played Detroit more times (35) than any other non-division foe. Atlanta has won six of nine games including a 31-18 victory in 2012 in the Motor City.



CAROLINA PANTHERS | 12-4 IN 2013

**AWAY NOV. 16
HOME DEC. 28**

SERIES

Falcons lead 23-15

LAST MEETING

2013 - Carolina won 21-20

STADIUM

Bank of America (73,298)

The third year of the Ron Rivera-Cam Newton era was a successful one for the Panthers. Carolina is coming off its first division title since 2008 and its 12-4 record matched a franchise-best.

The Panthers said goodbye to long-time face of the franchise Steve Smith, who signed with the Ravens in the offseason after being released. Fellow wide receivers Brandon LaFell and Ted Ginn also left Charlotte. Carolina selected former Florida State Seminole Kelvin Benjamin with the 28th pick of the draft and will depend on him to play early. Former Jet and Steeler Jericho Cotchery was also signed at wide receiver while Antoine Cason, Roman Harper and Thomas DeCoud came in to help in the secondary.

Despite losing three straight in this series, the Falcons have won seven of 11 and lead the all-time series 23-15. The Birds and Panthers have split the past eight meetings in Charlotte with Carolina taking the past two. Atlanta has won five of six in the Georgia Dome in this series.



CLEVELAND BROWNS | 4-12 IN 2013

HOME NOV. 23

SERIES

Cleveland leads 10-3

LAST MEETING

2010 - Falcons won 20-10

STADIUM

FirstEnergy (73,200)

Cleveland became the story of the draft when the Browns selected quarterback Johnny Manziel with the No. 22 overall pick. Analysts have been split on how the high-profile signal-caller will fare in the NFL after a college career filled with spontaneous playmaking and off-the-field questions. When Cleveland took "Johnny Football" it overshadowed its first pick, cornerback Justin Gilbert, whom the Browns took at No. 8. Gilbert will help immediately in a secondary that was fairly solid last year.

Mike Pettine was hired as head coach in the offseason and is the third coach in as many seasons for the Browns, who have not had a winning season since 2007 and have not made the playoffs since 2002.

Like the rest of the AFC North teams, the Falcons have not played the Browns since 2010. Atlanta won that last meeting 20-10 as Kroy Biermann took an interception 31 yards to seal the victory. Cleveland took the last game played in Atlanta 17-13 in 2006 after gaining an early 14-0 lead.



ARIZONA CARDINALS | 10-6 IN 2013

HOME NOV. 30

SERIES

Arizona leads 15-12

LAST MEETING

2013 - Arizona won 27-13

STADIUM

University of Phoenix (63,400)

The Cardinals were a hard-luck team last year, missing the playoffs after finishing 10-6 in arguably the toughest division in football. Carson Palmer had a bounce-back season under first-year head coach Bruce Arians, although he did throw 22 interceptions.

Arizona saw linebackers Karlos Dansby and Jasper Brinkley and offensive linemen Eric Winston and Daryn Colledge sign elsewhere, but brought in running back Jonathan Dwyer, wide receiver Ted Ginn, center Ted Larsen and cornerback Antonio Cromartie. Arizona drafted safety Deonne Bucannon in the first round and tight end Troy Niklas in the second.

For the third year in a row, the Falcons will take on Arizona. The Cardinals took last year's Battle of the Birds 27-13 in Glendale, but Atlanta has taken two of three and six of nine overall. Arizona leads the series 9-8 since moving from St. Louis and carries a 16-12 edge in the all-time series. The Falcons have won the past two played in Atlanta.



GREEN BAY PACKERS | 8-7-1 IN 2013

AWAY DEC. 8

SERIES

Green Bay leads 14-12

LAST MEETING

2013 - Green Bay won 22-21

STADIUM

Lambeau Field (72,928)

One of the most successful NFC franchises in recent years, the Packers head into 2014 as one of the favorites to make the Super Bowl. Quarterback Aaron Rodgers has been sensational since his draft-room disaster in 2005 when he was in the green room until being selected by Green Bay at pick No. 24.

Under Mike McCarthy, the Pack have made the playoffs in six of his eight seasons at the helm in Green Bay. Despite finishing 10-6 and narrowly clinching a playoff berth in 2010, the Packers went on a remarkable run in which they eventually won the Super Bowl, the fourth in franchise history.

The Packers took Alabama safety Ha Ha Clinton-Dix in the first round of the draft, then grabbed three wide receivers, including second-rounder Davante Adams out of Fresno State.

Atlanta will travel to the Frozen Tundra late in the season for the second year in a row after dropping a 22-21 decision in 2013. The teams have played five times since 2008, with the Falcons winning two.



PITTSBURGH STEELERS | 8-8 IN 2013

HOME DEC. 14

SERIES

Pittsburgh leads 12-2-1

LAST MEETING

2010 - Pittsburgh won 15-9

STADIUM

Heinz Field (65,050)

After winning the Super Bowl in 2008, the Steelers have missed the playoffs three times and are coming off back-to-back 8-8 seasons. The leadership core that led them to World Championships in 2005 and 2008 has slowly disappeared and Pittsburgh seems to be on the decline. Veterans Ryan Clark, Brett Keisel, Emmanuel Sanders and LaMarr Woodley left the Steel City this past offseason. LaGarrette Blunt was signed to help Le'Veon Bell tote the rock while Mike Munchak was named offensive line coach.

The Steelers went defense with their first two draft picks, taking Ohio State linebacker Ryan Shazier with the No. 15 pick and Notre Dame's Stephon Tuitt in the second round.

After losing nine straight to Pittsburgh from 1974 to 1999, the Falcons have won two of the past three meetings. Atlanta beat the Steelers in 2006 in the Georgia Dome, a 41-38 shootout. The teams fought to a draw in a 2002 classic in the Steel City and Pittsburgh took the 2010 season opener 15-9 at Heinz Field in the teams' last meeting.





NFC Regular Season Schedule



ARIZONA CARDINALS

9/8	Chargers	10:20 PM ET
9/14	at Giants	1:00 PM ET
9/21	49ers	4:05 PM ET
10/5	at Broncos	4:05 PM ET
10/12	Redskins	4:25 PM ET
10/19	at Raiders	4:25 PM ET
10/26	Eagles	4:05 PM ET
11/2	at Cowboys	1:00 PM ET
11/9	Rams	4:25 PM ET
11/16	Lions	4:25 PM ET
11/23	at Seahawks	4:05 PM ET
11/30	at Falcons	4:05 PM ET
12/7	Chiefs	4:05 PM ET
12/11	at Rams	8:25 PM ET
12/21	Seahawks	8:30 PM ET
12/28	at 49ers	4:25 PM ET

DALLAS COWBOYS

9/7	49ers	4:25 PM ET
9/14	at Titans	1:00 PM ET
9/21	at Rams	1:00 PM ET
9/28	Saints	8:30 PM ET
10/5	Texans	1:00 PM ET
10/12	at Seahawks	4:25 PM ET
10/19	Giants	4:25 PM ET
10/27	Redskins	8:30 PM ET
11/2	Cardinals	1:00 PM ET
11/9	at Jaguars	1:00 PM ET
11/23	at Giants	8:30 PM ET
11/27	Eagles	4:30 PM ET
12/4	at Bears	8:25 PM ET
12/14	at Eagles	8:30 PM ET
12/21	Colts	4:25 PM ET
12/28	at Redskins	1:00 PM ET

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

9/7	at Falcons	1:00 PM ET
9/14	at Browns	1:00 PM ET
9/21	Vikings	1:00 PM ET
9/28	at Cowboys	8:30 PM ET
10/5	Buccaneers	1:00 PM ET
10/19	at Lions	1:00 PM ET
10/26	Packers	8:30 PM ET
10/30	at Panthers	8:25 PM ET
11/9	49ers	1:00 PM ET
11/16	Bengals	1:00 PM ET
11/24	Ravens	8:30 PM ET
11/30	at Steelers	1:00 PM ET
12/7	Panthers	1:00 PM ET
12/15	at Bears	8:30 PM ET
12/21	Falcons	1:00 PM ET
12/28	at Buccaneers	1:00 PM ET

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

9/7	at Cowboys	4:25 PM ET
9/14	Bears	8:30 PM ET
9/21	at Cardinals	4:05 PM ET
9/28	Eagles	4:25 PM ET
10/5	Chiefs	4:25 PM ET
10/13	at Rams	8:30 PM ET
10/19	at Broncos	8:30 PM ET
11/2	Rams	4:05 PM ET
11/9	at Saints	1:00 PM ET
11/16	at Giants	1:00 PM ET
11/23	Redskins	4:25 PM ET
11/27	Seahawks	8:30 PM ET
12/7	at Raiders	4:25 PM ET
12/14	at Seahawks	4:25 PM ET
12/20	Chargers	4:30 PM ET
12/28	Cardinals	4:25 PM ET

ATLANTA FALCONS

9/7	Saints	1:00 PM ET
9/14	at Bengals	1:00 PM ET
9/18	Buccaneers	8:25 PM ET
9/28	at Vikings	4:25 PM ET
10/5	at Giants	1:00 PM ET
10/12	Bears	1:00 PM ET
10/19	at Ravens	1:00 PM ET
10/26	Lions	9:30 AM ET
11/9	at Buccaneers	1:00 PM ET
11/16	at Panthers	1:00 PM ET
11/23	Browns	1:00 PM ET
11/30	Cardinals	4:05 PM ET
12/8	at Packers	8:30 PM ET
12/14	Steelers	1:00 PM ET
12/21	at Saints	1:00 PM ET
12/28	Panthers	1:00 PM ET

DETROIT LIONS

9/8	Giants	7:10 PM ET
9/14	at Panthers	1:00 PM ET
9/21	Packers	1:00 PM ET
9/28	at Jets	1:00 PM ET
10/5	Bills	1:00 PM ET
10/12	at Vikings	1:00 PM ET
10/19	Saints	1:00 PM ET
10/26	at Falcons	9:30 AM ET
11/9	Dolphins	1:00 PM ET
11/16	at Cardinals	4:25 PM ET
11/23	at Patriots	1:00 PM ET
11/27	Bears	12:30 PM ET
12/7	Buccaneers	1:00 PM ET
12/14	Vikings	1:00 PM ET
12/21	at Bears	1:00 PM ET
12/28	at Packers	1:00 PM ET

NEW YORK GIANTS

9/8	at Lions	7:10 PM ET
9/14	Cardinals	1:00 PM ET
9/21	Texans	1:00 PM ET
9/25	at Redskins	8:25 PM ET
10/5	Falcons	1:00 PM ET
10/12	at Eagles	8:30 PM ET
10/19	at Cowboys	4:25 PM ET
11/3	Colts	8:30 PM ET
11/9	at Seahawks	4:25 PM ET
11/16	49ers	1:00 PM ET
11/23	Cowboys	8:30 PM ET
11/30	at Jaguars	1:00 PM ET
12/7	at Titans	1:00 PM ET
12/14	Redskins	1:00 PM ET
12/21	at Rams	4:05 PM ET
12/28	Eagles	1:00 PM ET

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

9/4	Packers	8:30 PM ET
9/14	at Chargers	4:05 PM ET
9/21	Broncos	4:25 PM ET
10/6	at Redskins	8:30 PM ET
10/12	Cowboys	4:25 PM ET
10/19	at Rams	1:00 PM ET
10/26	at Panthers	1:00 PM ET
11/2	Raiders	4:25 PM ET
11/9	Giants	4:25 PM ET
11/16	at Chiefs	1:00 PM ET
11/23	Cardinals	4:05 PM ET
11/27	at 49ers	8:30 PM ET
12/7	at Eagles	4:25 PM ET
12/14	49ers	4:25 PM ET
12/21	at Cardinals	8:30 PM ET
12/28	Rams	4:25 PM ET

CAROLINA PANTHERS

9/7	at Buccaneers	4:25 PM ET
9/14	Lions	1:00 PM ET
9/21	Steelers	8:30 PM ET
9/28	at Ravens	1:00 PM ET
10/5	Bears	1:00 PM ET
10/12	at Bengals	1:00 PM ET
10/19	at Packers	1:00 PM ET
10/26	Seahawks	1:00 PM ET
10/30	Saints	8:25 PM ET
11/10	at Eagles	8:30 PM ET
11/16	Falcons	1:00 PM ET
11/30	at Vikings	1:00 PM ET
12/7	at Saints	1:00 PM ET
12/14	Buccaneers	1:00 PM ET
12/21	Browns	1:00 PM ET
12/28	at Falcons	1:00 PM ET

GREEN BAY PACKERS

9/4	at Seahawks	8:30 PM ET
9/14	Jets	4:25 PM ET
9/21	at Lions	1:00 PM ET
9/28	at Bears	1:00 PM ET
10/2	Vikings	8:25 PM ET
10/12	at Dolphins	1:00 PM ET
10/19	Panthers	1:00 PM ET
10/26	at Saints	8:30 PM ET
11/9	Bears	8:30 PM ET
11/16	Eagles	1:00 PM ET
11/23	at Vikings	1:00 PM ET
11/30	Patriots	4:25 PM ET
12/8	Falcons	8:30 PM ET
12/14	at Bills	1:00 PM ET
12/21	at Buccaneers	1:00 PM ET
12/28	Lions	1:00 PM ET

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

9/7	Jaguars	1:00 PM ET
9/15	at Colts	8:30 PM ET
9/21	Redskins	1:00 PM ET
9/28	at 49ers	4:25 PM ET
10/5	Rams	1:00 PM ET
10/12	Giants	8:30 PM ET
10/26	at Cardinals	4:05 PM ET
11/2	at Texans	1:00 PM ET
11/10	Panthers	8:30 PM ET
11/16	at Packers	1:00 PM ET
11/23	Titans	1:00 PM ET
11/27	at Cowboys	4:30 PM ET
12/7	Seahawks	4:25 PM ET
12/14	Cowboys	8:30 PM ET
12/20	at Redskins	4:30 PM ET
12/28	at Giants	1:00 PM ET

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

9/7	Panthers	4:25 PM ET
9/14	Rams	4:05 PM ET
9/18	at Falcons	8:25 PM ET
9/28	at Steelers	1:00 PM ET
10/5	at Saints	1:00 PM ET
10/12	Ravens	1:00 PM ET
10/26	Vikings	1:00 PM ET
11/2	at Browns	1:00 PM ET
11/9	Falcons	1:00 PM ET
11/16	at Redskins	1:00 PM ET
11/23	at Bears	1:00 PM ET
11/30	Bengals	1:00 PM ET
12/7	at Lions	1:00 PM ET
12/14	at Panthers	1:00 PM ET
12/21	Packers	1:00 PM ET
12/28	Saints	1:00 PM ET

CHICAGO BEARS

9/7	Bills	1:00 PM ET
9/14	at 49ers	8:30 PM ET
9/22	at Jets	8:30 PM ET
9/28	Packers	1:00 PM ET
10/5	at Panthers	1:00 PM ET
10/12	at Falcons	1:00 PM ET
10/19	at Dolphins	1:00 PM ET
10/26	at Patriots	1:00 PM ET
11/9	at Packers	8:30 PM ET
11/16	Vikings	1:00 PM ET
11/23	Buccaneers	1:00 PM ET
11/27	at Lions	12:30 PM ET
12/4	Cowboys	8:25 PM ET
12/15	Saints	8:30 PM ET
12/21	Lions	1:00 PM ET
12/28	at Vikings	1:00 PM ET

MINNESOTA VIKINGS

9/7	at Rams	1:00 PM ET
9/14	Patriots	1:00 PM ET
9/21	at Saints	1:00 PM ET
9/28	Falcons	4:25 PM ET
10/2	at Packers	8:25 PM ET
10/12	Lions	1:00 PM ET
10/19	at Bills	1:00 PM ET
10/26	at Buccaneers	1:00 PM ET
11/2	Redskins	1:00 PM ET
11/16	at Bears	1:00 PM ET
11/23	Packers	1:00 PM ET
11/30	Panthers	1:00 PM ET
12/7	Jets	1:00 PM ET
12/14	at Lions	1:00 PM ET
12/21	at Dolphins	1:00 PM ET
12/28	Bears	1:00 PM ET

ST. LOUIS RAMS

9/7	Vikings	1:00 PM ET
9/14	at Buccaneers	4:05 PM ET
9/21	Cowboys	1:00 PM ET
10/5	at Eagles	1:00 PM ET
10/13	49ers	8:30 PM ET
10/19	Seahawks	1:00 PM ET
10/26	at Chiefs	1:00 PM ET
11/2	at 49ers	4:05 PM ET
11/9	at Cardinals	4:25 PM ET
11/16	Broncos	1:00 PM ET
11/23	at Chargers	4:05 PM ET
11/30	Raiders	1:00 PM ET
12/7	at Redskins	1:00 PM ET
12/11	Cardinals	8:25 PM ET
12/21	Giants	4:05 PM ET
12/28	at Seahawks	4:25 PM ET

WASHINGTON REDSKINS

9/7	at Texans	1:00 PM ET
9/14	Jaguars	1:00 PM ET
9/21	at Eagles	1:00 PM ET
9/25	Giants	8:25 PM ET
10/6	Seahawks	8:30 PM ET
10/12	at Cardinals	4:25 PM ET
10/19	Titans	1:00 PM ET
10/27	at Cowboys	8:30 PM ET
11/2	at Vikings	1:00 PM ET
11/16	Buccaneers	1:00 PM ET
11/23	at 49ers	4:25 PM ET
11/30	at Colts	1:00 PM ET
12/7	Rams	1:00 PM ET
12/14	at Giants	1:00 PM ET
12/20	Eagles	4:30 PM ET
12/28	Cowboys	1:00 PM ET



AFC Regular Season Schedule



BALTIMORE RAVENS

9/7	Bengals	1:00 PM ET
9/11	Steelers	8:25 PM ET
9/21	at Browns	1:00 PM ET
9/28	Panthers	1:00 PM ET
10/5	at Colts	1:00 PM ET
10/12	at Buccaneers	1:00 PM ET
10/19	Falcons	1:00 PM ET
10/26	at Bengals	1:00 PM ET
11/2	at Steelers	8:30 PM ET
11/9	Titans	1:00 PM ET
11/24	at Saints	8:30 PM ET
11/30	Chargers	1:00 PM ET
12/7	at Dolphins	1:00 PM ET
12/14	Jaguars	1:00 PM ET
12/21	at Texans	1:00 PM ET
12/28	Browns	1:00 PM ET

DENVER BRONCOS

9/7	Colts	8:30 PM ET
9/14	Chiefs	4:25 PM ET
9/21	at Seahawks	4:25 PM ET
10/5	Cardinals	4:05 PM ET
10/12	at Jets	1:00 PM ET
10/19	49ers	8:30 PM ET
10/23	Chargers	8:25 PM ET
11/2	at Patriots	4:25 PM ET
11/9	at Raiders	4:05 PM ET
11/16	at Rams	1:00 PM ET
11/23	Dolphins	4:25 PM ET
11/30	at Chiefs	8:30 PM ET
12/7	Bills	4:05 PM ET
12/14	at Chargers	4:05 PM ET
12/22	at Bengals	8:30 PM ET
12/28	Raiders	4:25 PM ET

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

9/7	Titans	1:00 PM ET
9/14	at Broncos	4:25 PM ET
9/21	at Dolphins	4:25 PM ET
9/29	Patriots	8:30 PM ET
10/5	at 49ers	4:25 PM ET
10/19	at Chargers	4:05 PM ET
10/26	Rams	1:00 PM ET
11/2	Jets	1:00 PM ET
11/9	at Bills	1:00 PM ET
11/16	Seahawks	1:00 PM ET
11/20	at Raiders	8:25 PM ET
11/30	Broncos	8:30 PM ET
12/7	at Cardinals	4:05 PM ET
12/14	Raiders	1:00 PM ET
12/21	at Steelers	1:00 PM ET
12/28	Chargers	1:00 PM ET

OAKLAND RAIDERS

9/7	at Jets	1:00 PM ET
9/14	Texans	4:25 PM ET
9/21	at Patriots	1:00 PM ET
9/28	Dolphins	1:00 PM ET
10/12	Chargers	4:05 PM ET
10/19	Cardinals	4:25 PM ET
10/26	at Browns	4:25 PM ET
11/2	at Seahawks	4:25 PM ET
11/9	Broncos	4:05 PM ET
11/16	at Chargers	4:05 PM ET
11/20	Chiefs	8:25 PM ET
11/30	at Rams	1:00 PM ET
12/7	49ers	4:25 PM ET
12/14	at Chiefs	1:00 PM ET
12/21	Bills	4:25 PM ET
12/28	at Broncos	4:25 PM ET

BUFFALO BILLS

9/7	at Bears	1:00 PM ET
9/14	Dolphins	1:00 PM ET
9/21	Chargers	1:00 PM ET
9/28	at Texans	1:00 PM ET
10/5	at Lions	1:00 PM ET
10/12	Patriots	1:00 PM ET
10/19	Vikings	1:00 PM ET
10/26	at Jets	1:00 PM ET
11/9	Chiefs	1:00 PM ET
11/13	at Dolphins	8:25 PM ET
11/23	Jets	1:00 PM ET
11/30	Browns	1:00 PM ET
12/7	at Broncos	4:05 PM ET
12/14	Packers	1:00 PM ET
12/21	at Raiders	4:25 PM ET
12/28	at Patriots	1:00 PM ET

HOUSTON TEXANS

9/7	Redskins	1:00 PM ET
9/14	at Raiders	4:25 PM ET
9/21	at Giants	1:00 PM ET
9/28	Bills	1:00 PM ET
10/5	at Cowboys	1:00 PM ET
10/9	Colts	8:25 PM ET
10/20	at Steelers	8:30 PM ET
10/26	at Titans	1:00 PM ET
11/2	Eagles	1:00 PM ET
11/16	at Browns	1:00 PM ET
11/23	Bengals	1:00 PM ET
11/30	Titans	1:00 PM ET
12/7	at Jaguars	1:00 PM ET
12/14	at Colts	1:00 PM ET
12/21	Ravens	1:00 PM ET
12/28	Jaguars	1:00 PM ET

MIAMI DOLPHINS

9/7	Patriots	1:00 PM ET
9/14	at Bills	1:00 PM ET
9/21	Chiefs	4:25 PM ET
9/28	at Raiders	1:00 PM ET
10/12	Packers	1:00 PM ET
10/19	at Bears	1:00 PM ET
10/26	at Jaguars	1:00 PM ET
11/2	Chargers	1:00 PM ET
11/9	at Lions	1:00 PM ET
11/13	Bills	8:25 PM ET
11/23	at Broncos	4:25 PM ET
12/1	at Jets	8:30 PM ET
12/7	Ravens	1:00 PM ET
12/14	at Patriots	1:00 PM ET
12/21	Vikings	1:00 PM ET
12/28	Jets	1:00 PM ET

PITTSBURGH STEELERS

9/7	Browns	1:00 PM ET
9/11	at Ravens	8:25 PM ET
9/21	at Panthers	8:30 PM ET
9/28	Buccaneers	1:00 PM ET
10/5	at Jaguars	1:00 PM ET
10/12	at Browns	1:00 PM ET
10/20	Texans	8:30 PM ET
10/26	Colts	4:25 PM ET
11/2	Ravens	8:30 PM ET
11/9	at Jets	1:00 PM ET
11/17	at Titans	8:30 PM ET
11/30	Saints	1:00 PM ET
12/7	at Bengals	1:00 PM ET
12/14	at Falcons	1:00 PM ET
12/21	Chiefs	1:00 PM ET
12/28	Bengals	1:00 PM ET

CINCINNATI BENGALS

9/7	at Ravens	1:00 PM ET
9/14	Falcons	1:00 PM ET
9/21	Titans	1:00 PM ET
10/5	at Patriots	8:30 PM ET
10/12	Panthers	1:00 PM ET
10/19	at Colts	1:00 PM ET
10/26	Ravens	1:00 PM ET
11/2	Jaguars	1:00 PM ET
11/6	Browns	8:25 PM ET
11/16	at Saints	1:00 PM ET
11/23	at Texans	1:00 PM ET
11/30	at Buccaneers	1:00 PM ET
12/7	Steelers	1:00 PM ET
12/14	at Browns	1:00 PM ET
12/22	Broncos	8:30 PM ET
12/28	at Steelers	1:00 PM ET

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

9/7	at Broncos	8:30 PM ET
9/15	Eagles	8:30 PM ET
9/21	at Jaguars	1:00 PM ET
9/28	Titans	1:00 PM ET
10/5	Ravens	1:00 PM ET
10/9	at Texans	8:25 PM ET
10/19	Bengals	1:00 PM ET
10/26	at Steelers	4:25 PM ET
11/3	at Giants	8:30 PM ET
11/16	Patriots	8:30 PM ET
11/23	Jaguars	1:00 PM ET
11/30	Redskins	1:00 PM ET
12/7	at Browns	1:00 PM ET
12/14	Texans	1:00 PM ET
12/21	at Cowboys	4:25 PM ET
12/28	at Titans	1:00 PM ET

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

9/7	at Dolphins	1:00 PM ET
9/14	at Vikings	1:00 PM ET
9/21	Raiders	1:00 PM ET
9/29	at Chiefs	8:30 PM ET
10/5	Bengals	8:30 PM ET
10/12	at Bills	1:00 PM ET
10/16	Jets	8:25 PM ET
10/26	Bears	1:00 PM ET
11/2	Broncos	4:25 PM ET
11/16	at Colts	8:30 PM ET
11/23	Lions	1:00 PM ET
1/30	at Packers	4:25 PM ET
12/7	at Chargers	8:30 PM ET
12/14	Dolphins	1:00 PM ET
12/21	at Jets	1:00 PM ET
12/28	Bills	1:00 PM ET

SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

9/8	at Cardinals	10:20 PM ET
9/14	Seahawks	4:05 PM ET
9/21	at Bills	1:00 PM ET
9/28	Jaguars	4:05 PM ET
10/5	Jets	4:25 PM ET
10/12	at Raiders	4:05 PM ET
10/19	Chiefs	4:05 PM ET
10/23	at Broncos	8:25 PM ET
11/2	at Dolphins	1:00 PM ET
11/16	Raiders	4:05 PM ET
11/23	at Seahawks	4:05 PM ET
11/30	at Ravens	1:00 PM ET
12/7	Patriots	8:30 PM ET
12/14	Broncos	4:05 PM ET
12/20	at 49ers	4:30 PM ET
12/28	at Chiefs	1:00 PM ET

CLEVELAND BROWNS

9/7	at Steelers	1:00 PM ET
9/14	Saints	1:00 PM ET
9/21	Ravens	1:00 PM ET
10/5	at Titans	1:00 PM ET
10/12	Steelers	1:00 PM ET
10/19	at Jaguars	1:00 PM ET
10/26	Raiders	4:25 PM ET
11/2	Buccaneers	1:00 PM ET
11/6	at Bengals	8:25 PM ET
11/16	Texans	1:00 PM ET
11/23	at Falcons	1:00 PM ET
11/30	at Bills	1:00 PM ET
12/7	Colts	1:00 PM ET
12/14	Bengals	1:00 PM ET
12/21	at Panthers	1:00 PM ET
12/28	at Ravens	1:00 PM ET

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

9/7	at Eagles	1:00 PM ET
9/14	at Redskins	1:00 PM ET
9/21	Colts	1:00 PM ET
9/28	at Chargers	4:05 PM ET
10/5	Steelers	1:00 PM ET
10/12	at Titans	1:00 PM ET
10/19	Browns	1:00 PM ET
10/26	Dolphins	1:00 PM ET
11/2	at Bengals	1:00 PM ET
11/9	Cowboys	1:00 PM ET
11/23	at Colts	1:00 PM ET
11/30	Giants	1:00 PM ET
12/7	Texans	1:00 PM ET
12/14	at Ravens	1:00 PM ET
12/18	Titans	8:25 PM ET
12/28	at Texans	1:00 PM ET

NEW YORK JETS

9/7	Raiders	1:00 PM ET
9/14	at Packers	4:25 PM ET
9/22	Bears	8:30 PM ET
9/28	Lions	1:00 PM ET
10/5	at Chargers	4:25 PM ET
10/12	Broncos	1:00 PM ET
10/16	at Patriots	8:25 PM ET
10/26	Bills	1:00 PM ET
11/2	at Chiefs	1:00 PM ET
11/9	Steelers	1:00 PM ET
11/23	at Bills	1:00 PM ET
12/1	Dolphins	8:30 PM ET
12/7	at Vikings	1:00 PM ET
12/14	at Titans	4:05 PM ET
12/21	Patriots	1:00 PM ET
12/28	at Dolphins	1:00 PM ET

TENNESSEE TITANS

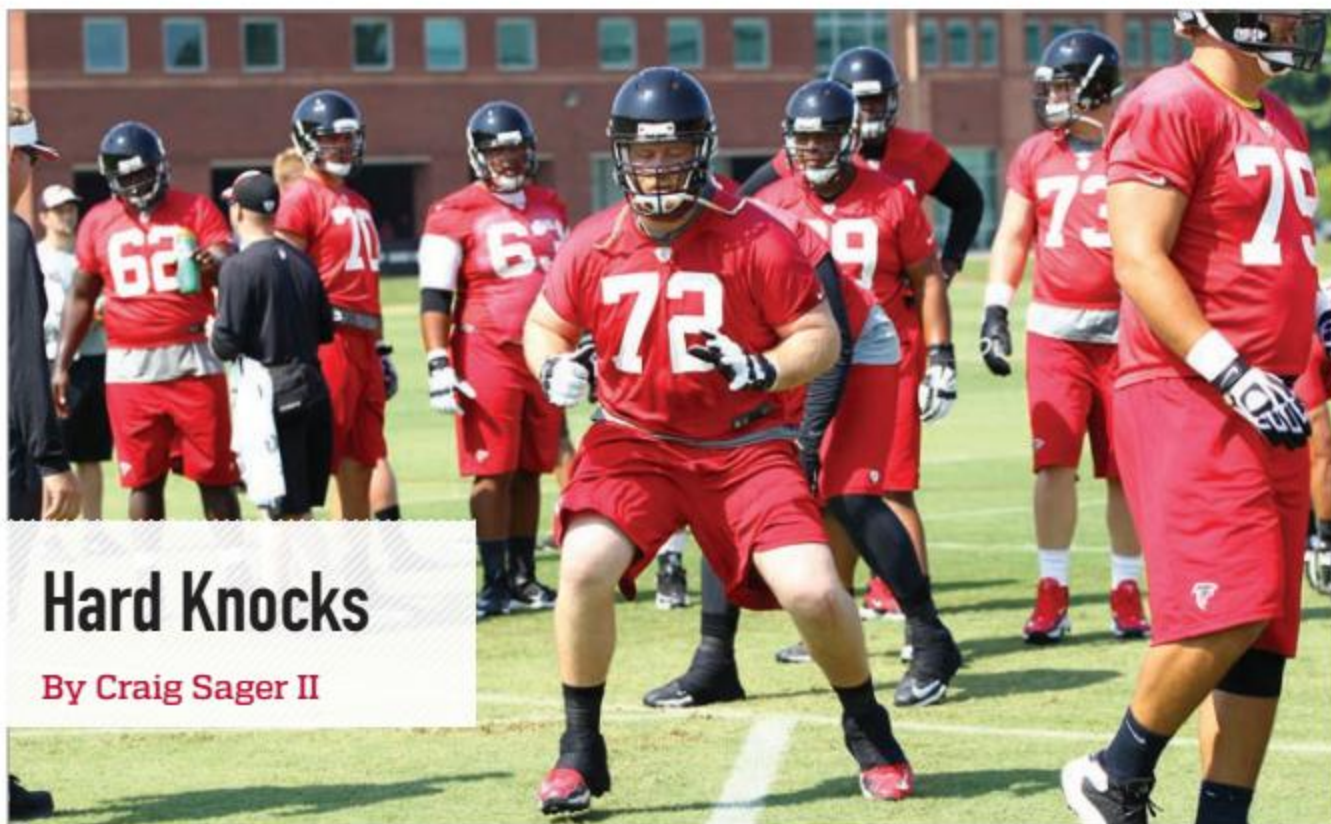
9/7	at Chiefs	1:00 PM ET
9/14	Cowboys	1:00 PM ET
9/21	at Bengals	1:00 PM ET
9/28	at Colts	1:00 PM ET
10/5	Browns	1:00 PM ET
10/12	Jaguars	1:00 PM ET
10/19	at Redskins	1:00 PM ET
10/26	Texans	1:00 PM ET
11/9	at Ravens	1:00 PM ET
11/17	Steelers	8:30 PM ET
11/23	at Eagles	1:00 PM ET
11/30	at Texans	1:00 PM ET
12/7	Giants	1:00 PM ET
12/14	Jets	4:05 PM ET
12/18	at Jaguars	8:25 PM ET
12/28	Colts	1:00 PM ET

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Hard Knocks

By Craig Sager II

Falcons welcome HBO to film popular television series that highlights preparation for the upcoming season

The Falcons are the featured team in Season 9 of HBO's football drama series "Hard Knocks."

Owner & Chairman Arthur Blank made it clear after the announcement why the Falcons decided to bring cameras into their headquarters.

"Before the NFL goes to the required list of teams that would be asked to do this, NFL Films, HBO, the League asks for teams that are anxious and willing to do it," explained Blank. "We understand the importance of Hard Knocks. We believed that you are in a better position in life when you can control them rather than somebody else controlling them for you. So we wanted to put this on our own timetable."

TELLING STORIES

The behind-the-scenes football drama will spotlight a team in the NFC for just the second time and the series will be the first time in the competitive NFC South. Blank, Head Coach Mike Smith and General Manager Thomas Dimitroff welcomed HBO President Ken Hershman and NFL Films Supervising Producer Ken Rodgers at a press conference to reveal all the plans for the show on June 19.

The complaint often thrown at Hard Knocks is that having the television crews and cameras around creates a distraction. Blank stated that the team plans to use the show as a constructive force for building excitement within the organization and around it.

"We believe we have an elite franchise in the National Football League," said Blank. "We believe we have a great story to tell and we want to share that with the fans."

Blank added a quote in his opening statement from newly-signed free safety Dwight Lowery, who was on the New York Jets in 2010 when Hard Knocks followed their training camp.

"If a player is distracted by a few crews on the sideline during practice, he certainly won't

be able to handle 4th and 1 in a playoff game with 70,000 people screaming. The increased attention has traditionally been met with greater focus and not less," said Lowery.

HBO has been working with NFL Films since 1977 and Films has been covering training camps since 1967. HBO president Ken Hershman explained the appeal of capturing that stage.

"There is so much attention these days on the plays and the athleticism of these guys," Hershman said. "Hard Knocks is all about relationships, how they evolve between the players and coaches and the players themselves. The families are also involved. It's about success, it's about failure, it's about human drama and emotion and it's story-telling, really, at its finest. I think that is what is so captivating about the show. Whether you are an Atlanta Falcons fan or an NFL fan or just a fan of human drama, there is no better show on television."

About a dozen coaches and players will be mic'd up during each practice and sessions typically are filmed by a five-person crew. The cameras that are used inside the facility are set up ahead of time so film sessions and meetings are not interrupted.

The theme of this year's show won't be known until the action begins and the HBO and NFL Films crews sorts through and edits the footage.

"That's the beauty of this (the filming process). You have 90 stories to tell," Hershman said. "That's the fun in this process. You don't know how it's going to play out."

Smith will get the first look at scenes and will have a say in omitting material he feels would give other teams insights and a competitive advantage.

"We are looking forward to connecting with our fans across the country as the program chronicles our 2014 training camp," said Smith. "The series will give fans a behind the scenes look at the competition between players as we

build our roster and prepare for the season."

The timing of going on Hard Knocks is ideal for the Falcons and the fans. They are coming the only losing season in the Smith-Matt Ryan era and enter 2014 loaded with a few new coaches and veteran players hungry for postseason success. This year's draft class also features intriguing prospects from No. 6 overall selection Jake Matthews to No. 2 round pick DE Ra'Shede Hageman and four linebackers added in the later rounds.

The Falcons revolutionary billion dollar stadium set to open in 2017 has already broken ground in downtown Atlanta and will get time on the program showing the world some of the amazing features the venue will offer.

"We are definitely looking at the new stadium for the show," said Hershman. "I have only glanced at the plans and they are unbelievable and really just spectacular. We've got our homework to do on learning everything the stadium has in store for 2017."

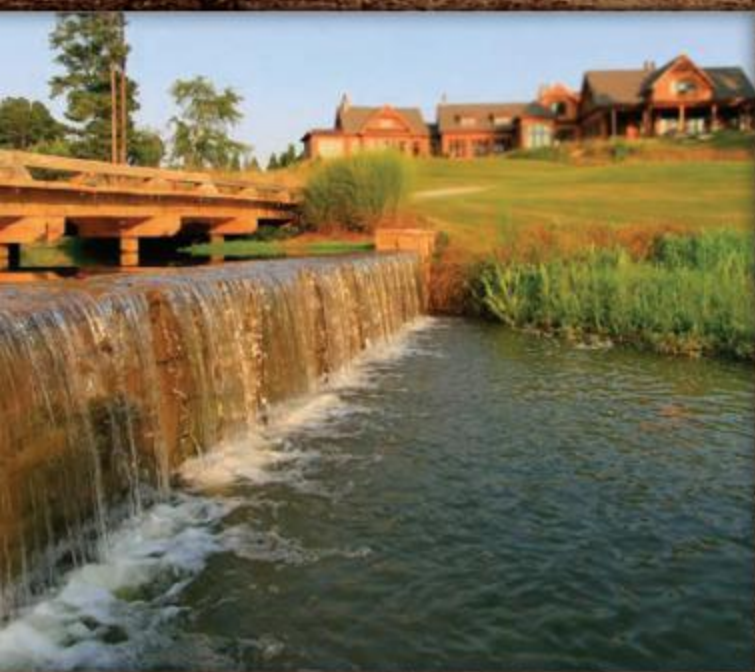
The five-week schedule of the show will also walk millions of eager football fans through preparation for one of the biggest NFL games of the season. The Falcons open the year at home for the first time in five years and it happens to be against their biggest rival, the New Orleans Saints. ///



TRAINING CAMP WITH THE ATLANTA FALCONS

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	2002	DALLAS COWBOYS
	2007	KANSAS CITY CHIEFS
	2008	DALLAS COWBOYS
	2009	CINCINNATI BENGALS
	2010	NEW YORK JETS
	2012	MIAMI DOLPHINS
	2013	CINCINNATI BENGALS
	2014	ATLANTA FALCONS

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Falcons lead Heads Up Football initiative to teach youth

The Atlanta Falcons have been spreading the word throughout the state about Heads Up Football during the offseason. Heads Up Football, a newer, safer way of teaching tackling, starts with the youth in order to prevent them from building bad habits. Heads Up Football teaches techniques that help educate and emphasize proper football skills that will decrease the occurrence of concussions in football. The Falcons realize the significance of teaching this new way of thinking. The Falcons completed a six-city Heads Up Football Safety Clinic tour around the state, which included Albany, Macon, Columbus, Athens, Gainesville and Augusta. The free, one-day clinics were open to children between the ages of six and 14. In addition to teaching Heads Up Tackling techniques, campers received position-specific training, as well as character-based lessons. More than 600 kids and 500 parents attended these clinics, which began in February and ended in May.

FALCONS GET INVOLVED

Former and current players participated in on-field drills emphasizing Heads Up Football tackling techniques from USA Football. USA Football's Heads up Tackling is a step-by-step protocol to teach core principles of tackling. Five fundamentals are taught through a series of drills that help reiterate proper tackling mechanics that focus on reducing helmet contacts. The five fundamentals are: breakdown, buzz, hit, shoot, and rip. Each of these fundamental skills is listed in greater detail on USA Football's website.

In addition to on the field training, former Falcons linebacker and USA Football Master Trainer Buddy Curry led an informational session for parents, focused on improving player safety, proper equipment fitting and concussion education.

Curry spoke of the importance of coaches

to learn as much as they can about concussions. Many children that suffer a concussion either don't know they have suffered one, or they do not want to tell anyone because they know if they do they will not be allowed to play.

Curry explained that a forceful bump, blow or jolt to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head or any change in behavior, thinking or physical functioning are the first signs of a concussion. Curry helped parents and coaches understand the many symptoms and signs of concussions. Once Curry discussed how to diagnose a concussion, he then spoke about what to do if a concussion is suspected and how to treat the athlete as he recovers from a concussion. An important saying that Curry reiterated was "when in doubt, sit them out."

In addition to the Heads Up Safety Clinics, the Atlanta Falcons also hosted four Moms Football Safety Clinics, including one in Montana, which were designed for mothers who have a

child that plays football or wants to play football. The clinics included classroom instruction, a question-and-answer panel with Stephanie Douglas, mother of wide receiver Harry Douglas, and Melissa Bryant, wife of kicker Matt Bryant, and Chris Golic, Heads Up Football Advisory member and wife of ESPN's Mike Golic. Curry led similar information sessions as he did for the Heads Up Safety Clinics.

Football is the most popular sport in the state of Georgia. The Atlanta Falcons organization knows that they have the platform to make a difference in the lives of the children that dream of being part of the NFL. The Falcons were integral in converting many youth football programs around Georgia into Heads Up Football leagues over the last two years and are committed to continuing to be NFL leaders with Heads Up Football initiatives. ///





NFL Preview

By Ricky Dimon

Russell Wilson

As parity dominates League, West division teams aim to meet again in Super Bowl

More than perhaps any other major professional sport, the National Football League is defined by parity and belief—parity not necessarily in a specific single season, but certainly among the recent list of champions; belief that the fluctuations from year to year can be so wild that every one of the 32 teams can find reason for hope, not in the future, but in the now.

The last six seasons have featured six different Super Bowl winners (the New York Giants have won it all twice in the past seven years) and 11 different conference champions (only the Pittsburgh Steelers have reached the Super Bowl twice since the 2008 campaign). No team has gone back-to-back since the New England Patriots in 2003 and 2004. No team has even reached consecutive Super Bowls since those Patriots.

And how about this fact from 2012 to 2013: Only one NFC squad (the Green Bay Packers) repeated as division champion. Two of the 2012 division title winners finished either dead last or tied for last the following season; the Washington Redskins fell from 10-6 to 3-13 while the Atlanta Falcons came up nine games short of their 13-3 record two seasons ago with a 4-12 mark last year. In the AFC, the Houston Texans captured the South crown at 12-4 in 2012, then promptly played their way to the No. 1 overall draft pick with a horrendous 2-14 record in 2013. At the opposite extreme, the Kansas City Chiefs erased the demons of a 2-14 showing two years ago by winning 11 games and making the playoffs. The Philadelphia Eagles' turnaround was not quite as drastic numbers-wise, but they dwelled in the NFC East cellar at 4-12 before winning the division at 10-6 in 2013.

THE FAVORITES

The Seattle Seahawks and Denver Broncos obviously hope there is no change at or near the top as this season progresses. They are early favorites to make it back to the Super Bowl, and why not?

The Seahawks' run to the most recent Lombardi Trophy included an NFC Championship win over an outstanding San Francisco 49ers team and a 43-8 humiliation of Peyton Manning and the Broncos in Super Bowl XLVIII. Seattle has a young, dual-threat quarterback in Russell Wilson who only seems to be getting better and better. It also boasts one of the game's best running backs in Marshawn Lynch and a hard-hitting, playmaking secondary that includes Kam Chancellor, Richard Sherman and Earl Thomas.

The pieces are certainly in place for the 'Hawks to have another go at it.

Denver has made more than a few changes to its roster, but the Broncos obviously still have Manning. Wes Welker and Demaryius Thomas are back on board to catch passes from the future Hall of Famer. The Broncos' offense has never been a question mark and their defense may see improvement this year. Former Dallas Cowboys' linebacker DeMarcus Ware was signed as a free agent and the secondary should benefit from the arrival of former Patriot cornerback Aqib Talib and former Cleveland Brown safety T.J. Ward.

HOW THE WEST WILL BE WON

No division will be more intriguing than the NFC West. At least on paper, it features the two best teams in the conference in Seattle and San Francisco. The Arizona Cardinals got overshadowed last season, but their rise from 5-11 to 10-6 should not be forgotten. Arizona can rely on a defense that mixes in a nice blend of youth and experience, but the offense's supporting role will have to be marked by fewer mistakes by veteran quarterback Carson Palmer. While tossing 24 touchdowns last season, the 34-year old also threw 22 interceptions, a career-high. The St. Louis Rams have posted a losing record seven straight years and have not finished above .500 since 2003, but they have accounted themselves well in arguably the toughest division in football the past two seasons. Bringing in offensive tackle Greg Robinson in the draft should help Jeff Fisher's squad keep quarterback Sam Bradford upright.

If last season's Super Bowl is any indication, Denver is simply not as good of a team from top to bottom as Seattle. It can be argued, however, that the Broncos' are more likely than their conquerors to win their respective divi-



Calvin Johnson



sion. The bottom line is that the competition in the AFC West is not as strong. Both wild-card teams came from within the division last season, but the San Diego Chargers are a perennial .500-esque squad. The Oakland Raiders added a nice pass-rusher in Khalil Mack and brought in Matt Schaub in an attempt to stabilize the quarterback position, but they appear to be several pieces away from contending. A revamped Kansas City franchise will have to prove its 2013 division title was no fluke.

BEASTS OF THE EAST

No division has been dominated of late quite like the AFC East. The Patriots have won it five times in succession, 10 times in the last 11 seasons and 11 times in the last 13. They see their supporting cast turn over every now and then, but they still have Tom Brady. Rob Gronkowski's health will once again be a factor on the offensive side of the ball. On defense, Darrelle Revis has been assigned to replace Talib.

As usual, the New York Jets will generate plenty of attention—once again at the quarterback position. They drafted Geno Smith last year and, this year, added Michael Vick as a free agent and selected Tajh Boyd in the draft. The Miami Dolphins may be in rebuilding mode after last season's off-the-field debacle with the offensive line, while the Buffalo Bills will be exciting to watch with former Clemson stars C.J. Spiller and rookie Sammy Watkins. Whether excitement translates to wins, however, is a different story and will depend on the defense.

Speaking of different stories, that is the case in the NFC East—a division laced with parity and one that in the current era almost never has any kind of clear-cut favorite heading into any season. No group of four is more of a quarterback saga than this one. The fate of the Redskins rests on the arm and feet of Robert Griffin III. New York's Eli Manning is a two-time Super Bowl MVP, but he threw a ridiculous 27 interceptions last season. Nick Foles beat out Vick for the Eagles' job and promptly led that team to the 2013 division crown. Then, of course, there is Tony Romo. There is no question Romo can make the Cowboys an NFC East contender, but can he get them over the hump in December? No matter what, he will undoubtedly need more help from a defense that finished dead last in the NFL with room to spare in 2013.

NORTHERN LIGHTS

Cincinnati was the only real bright light in the North last season—and that goes for both conferences. The Bengals coasted to the AFC North title by a three-game margin at 11-5. They outscored opponents by 125 points, while second-place Pittsburgh was second best in that department with a modest +9 differential. Cincinnati may be built for the long haul, with

A.J. Green



an offensive corps featuring quarterback Andy Dalton, running back Giovani Bernard, receiver A.J. Green and tight ends Jermaine Gresham and Tyler Eifert. The Bengals also quietly finished third in the entire League in total defense behind headline-grabbers Seattle and Carolina. The rest of the division is one big question mark. Baltimore Ravens' running back Ray Rice is dealing with off-the-field issues, Cleveland wideout Josh Gordon is facing a season-long suspension and the Steelers did not do much on paper during the offseason to improve an 8-8 squad.

In the NFC North, the Packers have been the finest cheese in all the land over the past three years. No matter that they have endured a steady decline (15-1 to 11-5 to 8-7-1), they have still been good enough to hold off a motley crew of challengers including the Chicago Bears, Minnesota Vikings and Detroit Lions. Quarterback Aaron Rodgers, however, played only nine games during the 2013 regular-season campaign. A healthy Rodgers the entire way should have Green Bay back on the upswing. Detroit's Matthew Stafford and Calvin Johnson-led offense make the team dangerous, but it will have to cut down on senseless mistakes in order to be taken seriously. The Lions finished tied for second to last in the NFC in turnover differential last year at -12, better than only Manning's Giants. The Bears' once-proud defense gave up a horrendous 478 points last year, leaving it tied for second to last in that category in the NFL. Minnesota did some nice work in the draft by selecting both linebacker Anthony Barr and quarterback Teddy Bridgewater in the first round, but first-year Head Coach Mike Zimmer is not likely to see his team take a one-year playoff plan.

SOUTHERN COOKING

In the AFC South, it's the one team that really has nothing to do with the south geographically that appears to be on the rise. Franchise quarterback Andrew Luck has guided the Indianapolis Colts to two straight playoff berths and the team may still be feeding off the momentum of last season's epic comeback win over Kansas City in the wild-card round. The Texans, of course, are going in the other direction. They plunged from 12-4 in 2012 to 2-14 in 2013, giving them the No. 1 overall pick. As a result, a defensive line featuring J.J. Watt and Jadeveon Clowney could be scary. The Jacksonville Jaguars are starting over with No. 1 drafted quarterback Blake Bortles and the Tennessee Titans are finally going in a different direction at running back, away from former star Chris Johnson. Needless to say, this is the Colts' division to lose.

No division has shared its titles among the four teams with more generosity than the NFC South since its inception in 2002. In 12 seasons, each one of the four has taken home top honors on three occasions. True to form, there is no telling which one will come out on top this time around. The Falcons suffered through an injury-plagued 2013 and look to rebound stronger in 2014. Drew Brees leads what should be another potent New Orleans Saints' offense and Cam Newton has a great Luke Kuechly-defense behind him with the Panthers. Lovie Smith is in as the new head coach of a young Tampa Bay Bucs team, which won four of its last eight games in 2013 after starting the year 0-8. ///



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Humphrey Gets The Call

By Ricky Dimon

At long last, Falcons sack leader receives Hall of Fame nod

In the future, Atlanta Falcons in the Pro Football Hall of Fame may be a common sight. We already know recently retired tight end Tony Gonzalez is on his way to Canton. The current roster, much of which has been around to see the team post five winning seasons and four playoff appearances since the start of the 2008 campaign, looks like it could be featuring a few more.

For now, however, Falcons of fame are only a few. Only Hall members Tommy McDonald (1967), Eric Dickerson (1993), Chris Doleman (1994-95) and Deion Sanders (1989-1993) played with Atlanta. Sanders is currently the only man drafted by the franchise to be enshrined in Canton.

When the 2014 calendar turns to August, you can add the name Claude Humphrey to those two lists. Humphrey, a defensive end who played in all or parts of 11 seasons (1968-78) as a Falcon, was inducted into the Hall of Fame on Feb. 1. He retired from football back in 1981, so his wait has spanned four decades. The Memphis, Tenn. native was a finalist for the Hall of Fame in 2003, 2005 and 2006 and a senior candidate in 2009, but he had fallen short on every occasion until this one in 2014.

"I'm still trying to wake up from the dream I'm living right now," Humphrey said in an interview with atlantafalcons.com. "I almost dropped to the floor (when I got the phone call). I just grabbed my daughter and held her and we both cried."

HUMPHREY'S CAREER

The Falcons selected Humphrey out of Tennessee State University in the first round of the 1968 NFL Draft and he wasted no time in making his presence felt. He earned NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year honors in 1968. In 1969, he was a second-team All-Pro, the first of three such teams he made during his career. Additionally, Humphrey played his way to a first-team All-Pro selection five times; 1971-74 and again in his final season in Atlanta in 1978. He was also a six-time Pro Bowler, including five consecutive, which still has him tied for the franchise lead in

both categories.

Humphrey became an increasingly dangerous force on the defensive line as his career progressed by learning the effectiveness of the then-legal head-slap and perfecting its technique. He would use his impressively large hands to batter the helmets of opposing offensive linemen, facilitating his way into backfields. Sacks were not part of the league's official statistics during Humphrey's era, but video review now credits him with 94.5 during his Atlanta career, putting him atop the franchise chart in that prestigious category, and an impressive 122 overall in his Hall of Fame career. After missing the 1975 season due to injury, he recorded a career-best 15.5 sacks in 1976—a mark that leaves him in third on the Falcons' single-season sack list.

"(Humphrey was) probably one of the most consistent players I ever played with," teammate Ken Reaves, who played cornerback for Atlanta between 1966 and 1973, told the Atlanta Journal Constitution. "All the quarterbacks in the League hated him. And all the tackles and tight ends who had to try to block him were worried about that head slap."

Teammates, on the other hand, obviously loved what Humphrey brought to the football field. They voted him as Atlanta's Most Valuable Player in 1976. In 1977, he was a key cog in the Falcons' "Grits Blitz" defense under first-year head coach Leeman Bennett. That unit set an NFL record for fewest points allowed in a season at 129 and per game (9.2), while racking up 42 sacks and intercepting 42 passes.

HUMPHREY TODAY

Humphrey's 1981 retirement came after playing his final three seasons with the Philadelphia Eagles, whom he helped reach Super Bowl XV (lost to the Oakland Raiders). Following his on-field career, Humphrey briefly dabbled in coaching—including a stint with the Falcons. Outside of football, he took Doberman Pinschers to show once he had more free time. That could

not have come as a big surprise to teammates, as Humphrey would often find any and all kinds of stray dogs to adopt during training camps.

Like many other retired NFL stars, Humphrey, 69, is now dealing with health issues. Cancer contributed to the loss of a kidney and he also has diabetes. A devout family man, Humphrey suffered the loss of his wife of 45 years, Sondra, last summer to ovarian cancer. Sondra was also Claude's staunch personal PR person who banged the drum for his inclusion into the Hall for years. Two of his three daughters currently live with him.

Humphrey was inducted into the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame in 2004, perhaps a precursor of bigger and better things to come. This 'Hall call' was a long time coming; and one that current Falcons Owner & Chairman Arthur Blank is glad to see come to fruition.

"Throughout his 10-year career in Atlanta, Claude Humphrey was considered one of the most dominant pass-rushers of his time," Blank said when it was announced Humphrey had been elected to the Hall. "Claude was what many offensive coaches called a 'game-wrecker' based on his ability to disrupt enemy offenses. His induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame—in my opinion—is long overdue. On behalf of Falcons fans and the entire Falcons organization, we congratulate Claude Humphrey...and we couldn't be more proud of him." ///



2014 HALL OF FAME CLASS

DERRICK BROOKS	Bucs 1995–2008
RAY GUY	Raiders 1973–1986
CLAUDE HUMPHREY	Falcons 1968–1974, 1976–1978; Eagles 1979–1981
WALTER JONES	Seahawks 1997–2009
ANDRE REED	Bills 1985–1999, Broncos/Redskins 2000
MICHAEL STRAHAN	Giants 1993–2007
AENEAS WILLIAMS	Cardinals 1991–2000, Rams 2001–2004



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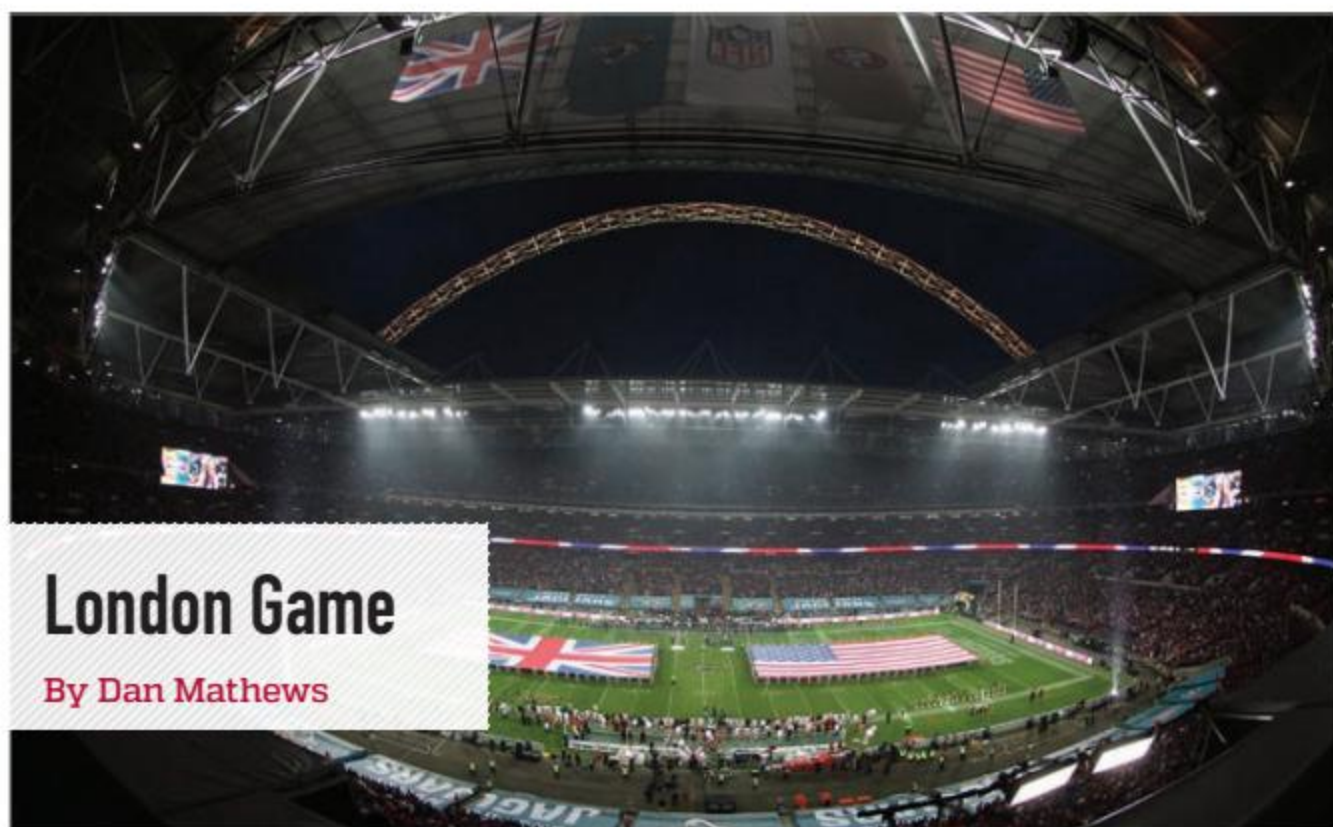
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London Game

By Dan Mathews

Birds to take flight on midseason trip to London, franchise's first-ever game in Europe

In Week 8 of the NFL season, the Falcons will take on the Detroit Lions at London's legendary Wembley Stadium. This will be Atlanta's first time playing in England.

The Falcons are trying to bounce back from a tough 4-12 season in 2013 and also trying to enhance their brand not only nationally, but also across the globe. This is definitely a goal of team Owner & Chairman Arthur Blank.

"We are excited and honored to serve as ambassadors for our city, our state and the National Football League," Blank said. "Playing in London will provide tremendous exposure to our team, as well as provide the opportunity to showcase the great international city of Atlanta. We are looking forward to representing the NFL on a global stage by playing in historic Wembley Stadium in what we are sure will be an entertaining game for NFL fans everywhere."

This is one of three games this season the NFL will be playing at the London venue. The Falcons-Lions game is the second out of the three games across the pond. In Week 4, the Oakland Raiders take on the Miami Dolphins. Two weeks after the Falcons matchup in England, the Dallas Cowboys take on the Jacksonville Jaguars.

These three games and increased branding opportunity outside of North America is an ever-expanding goal of NFL commissioner Roger Goodell.

"Our fans in the UK have continued to demonstrate that they love football and want more," Goodell said at the NFL Owners Meetings during fall of 2013. "Both of this year's games in London sold out quickly. The fan enthusiasm for our sport continues to grow. We hope that with three games in London next year we will attract even more people to our game."

TRIP OF A LIFETIME

The Falcons players and Head Coach Mike Smith are excited about playing overseas. For some of the players this will be the first time

they've even been to London. Second-year cornerback Desmond Trufant is one of those guys.

"I'm very excited," Trufant said. "I've never been over there to that side of the world. So it should be a pretty cool experience. I assume it's a sold-out game, so it should be pretty loud. It should be a fun time."

Trufant has a teammate that agrees with him in veteran wide receiver Harry Douglas. The Atlanta native is looking forward to the opportunity to enhance not only the Falcons' brand, but football in general.

"Anytime you can showcase the NFL and get the brand out there it's great," Douglas said. "Going over to London is a great thing. (We get) to show the world how we play football in other countries and outside of the U.S."

The NFL is a league that is run by routines and having a consistent schedule from week to week. Games like this have made some teams

nervous about taking part in these international series contests. That said, it doesn't make Smith nervous. The game is still a few months away from kicking off. However, Smith and his staff have already put together their plan for handling the before, during and after London game schedule.

"When we play in Baltimore (the week before), we're going to go to a nice restaurant to have a nice dinner, then about 8:30-9:00 o'clock we'll get on the plane and fly across to get there in the morning," Smith said. "First thing we'll do is check in, go do our walk-through, watch the film like we'd do on a normal Monday, and then get those guys in bed. Tuesday is their day off. Wednesday we're going to have our exact same routine, except we'll have a 20-minute bus ride to the Arsenal facility. Everything else like meeting times we'll be set up as just like we're here in Atlanta."

Smith continued to say that the team will be staying outside of London, until the day before the game. They are treating the preparation for this game just like any road contest.

The NFL has tried to make the game intriguing to all 32 teams, with a bye week immediately following the game overseas. That is exactly what will happen for the Falcons. They'll get back on the field Nov. 9 on the road against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

The London game does count as a home game for the Falcons. That being the case, the team will still be away from the Georgia Dome for five straight weeks. In fact, the Falcons only have three games in Atlanta during the months of October and November. They get the Chicago Bears in town for their lone game inside the Georgia Dome for the month of October. In November, the Cleveland Browns and then the Arizona Cardinals come to town for the last two weekends of November.

Along with this London game, the Falcons will also be on television sets across the country, taking part in the HBO series "Hard Knocks". This is all part of the Falcons trying to increase their brand as an organization, which will be as visible to the fans as ever during the 2014 season. ///

NFL International Series - London

10.25
2009

 PATRIOTS 35

 BUCS 7

84,254
ATTENDANCE

10.28
2012

 PATRIOTS 45

 RAMS 7

84,004
ATTENDANCE

10.28
2007

 GIANTS 13

 DOLPHINS 10

81,176
ATTENDANCE

10.31
2010

 BRONCOS 16

 49ERS 24

83,941
ATTENDANCE

09.29
2013

 STEELERS 27

 VIKINGS 34

83,518
ATTENDANCE

10.26
2008

 CHARGERS 32

 SAINTS 37

83,226
ATTENDANCE

10.23
2011

 BEARS 24

 BUCS 18

76,981
ATTENDANCE

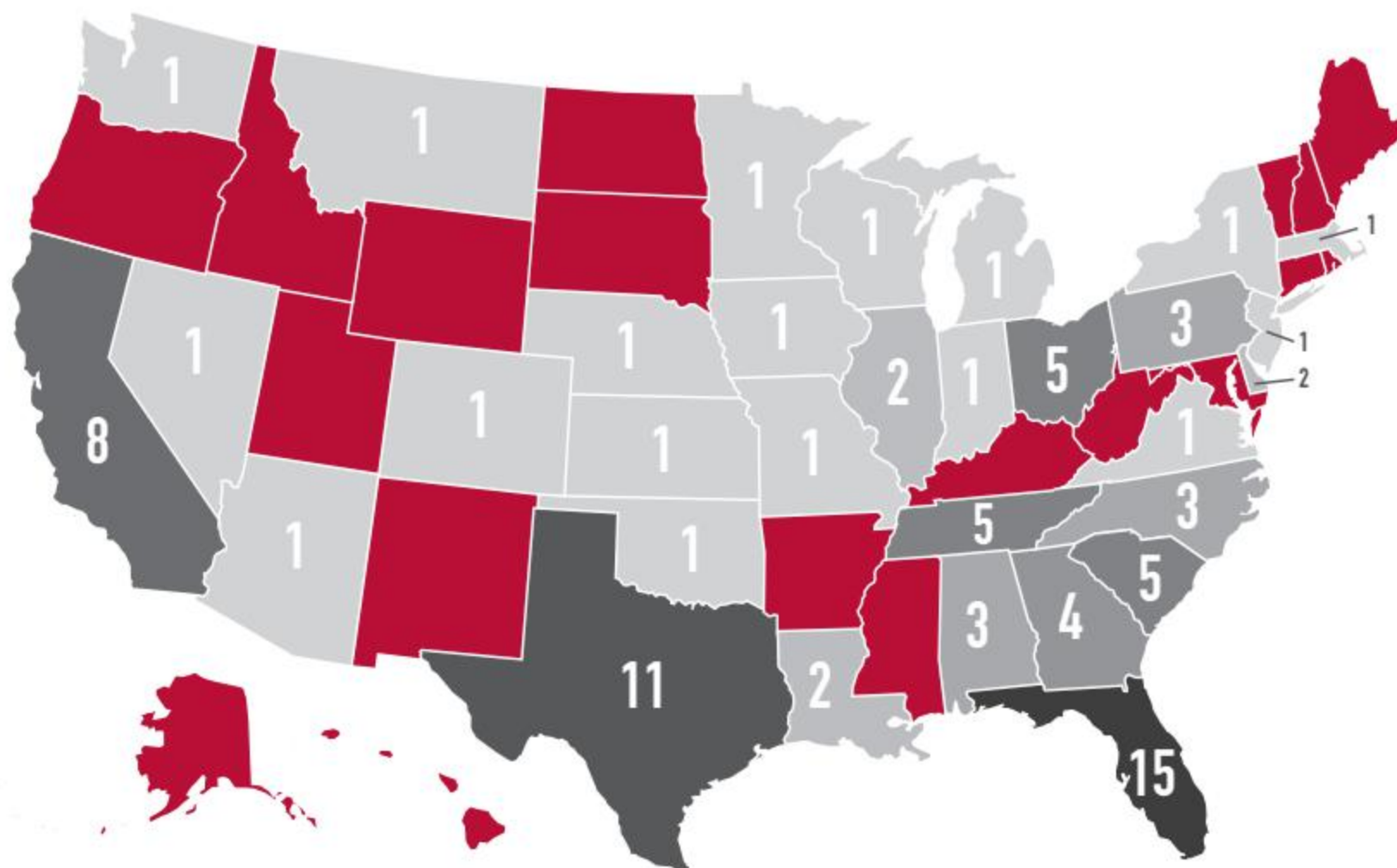
10.27
2013

 49ERS 42

 JAGUARS 10

83,559
ATTENDANCE

BIRDS NESTS



UNITED STATES OF THE FALCONS

ALABAMA

Dominique Croom
Julio Jones
Walker May

ARIZONA

Sean Renfree

CALIFORNIA

Sam Baker
Brenden Daley
Joe Hawley
Dwight Lowery
Jeff Matthews
Bear Pascoe
Paul Soliai
Levine Toilolo

COLORADO

Drew Davis

DELAWARE

Jerome Smith
Paul Worrilow

FLORIDA

Ricardo Allen
Javier Arenas
Matt Bosher
Patrick DiMarco
Harry Douglas
Devonta Freeman

Maurice Hagens

Devin Hester
Kemal Ishmael
Mike Johnson
Terren Jones
Zeke Motta
Bernard Reedy
Antone Smith
Dezmen Southward

GEORGIA

Devonta Glover-Wright
Josh Harris
Kimario McFadden
T.J. Yates

ILLINOIS

Jon Asamoah
Gabe Carimi

INDIANA

Courtney Roby

IOWA

Tyler Starr

KANSAS

Ryan Schraeder

LOUISIANA

Robert Alford
Tyson Jackson

MASSACHUSETTS

Yawin Smallwood

MICHIGAN

Jacob Pedersen

MINNESOTA

Ra'Shede Hageman

MISSOURI

William Moore

MONTANA

Kroy Biermann

NEBRASKA

Harland Gunn

NEVADA

Steven Jackson

NEW JERSEY

Marquis Spruill

NEW YORK

Mickey Shuler

NORTH CAROLINA

Lamar Holmes
Travian Robertson
Prince Shembo

OHIO

Sean Baker
Jordan Mabin
Roosevelt Nix
Adam Replogle
Brian Wozniak

OKLAHOMA

Tramaine Thompson

PENNSYLVANIA

Robert McClain
Corey Peters
Matt Ryan

SOUTH CAROLINA

Malliciah Goodman
Freddie Martino
Cliff Matthews
Donte Rumph
Roddy White

TENNESSEE

Tim Dobbins
Peria Jerry
Julian Jones
Jacques Smith
James Stone

TEXAS

Jonathan Babineaux
Joplo Bartu

Justin Blalock

Matt Bryant
Sergio Castillo
Nosa Eguae
Darius Johnson
Jake Matthews
Jacquizz Rodgers
Sean Weatherspoon
Josh Wilson

VIRGINIA

Josh Vaughan

WASHINGTON

Desmond Trufant

WISCONSIN

Peter Konz

INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS

ENGLAND

Osi Umenyiora

LIBERIA

Jonathan Massaquoi

NETHERLANDS

Geraldo Boldewijn

ZIMBABWE

Stansly Maponga



FALCONS PLAYERS FROM THE SAME HOMETOWN

MIAMI, FLA.

Devonta Freeman
Kemal Ishmael
Zeke Motta

TAMPA, FLA.

Javier Arenas
Harry Douglas

MEMPHIS, TENN.

Peria Jerry
Julian Jones

NASHVILLE, TENN.

Tim Dobbins
James Stone

HOUSTON, TEXAS

Darius Johnson
Josh Wilson



FALCONS ALMA MATERS

ALABAMA



Javier Arenas
Mike Johnson
Julio Jones

ALABAMA-BIRMINGHAM



Roddy White

ALABAMA STATE



Terren Jones

ARKANSAS STATE



Julian Jones

AUBURN



Nosa Eguae
Josh Harris

BALL STATE



Sean Baker

BAYLOR



Matt Bryant

BOISE STATE



Geraldo Boldewijn

BOSTON COLLEGE



Matt Ryan

CENTRAL FLORIDA



Kemal Ishmael

CLEMSON



Malliciah Goodman

CONNECTICUT



Robert McClain
Yawin Smallwood

CORNELL



Jeff Matthews

DELAWARE



Paul Worrlow

DUKE



Sean Renfree

FLORIDA STATE



Devonta Freeman
Antone Smith

FRESNO STATE



Bear Pascoe

HAWAII



Brenden Daley

ILLINOIS



Jon Asamoah

INDIANA



Adam Replogle
Courtney Roby

IOWA



Jonathan Babineaux

IOWA STATE



Tim Dobbins

KANSAS STATE



Tramaine Thompson

KENT STATE



Roosevelt Nix

KENTUCKY



Corey Peters
Donte Rumph

LOUISVILLE



Harry Douglas

LSU



Tyson Jackson

MARYLAND



Josh Wilson

MIAMI (FLA.)



Matt Boshier
Harland Gunn
Maurice Hagens
Devin Hester

MINNESOTA



Ra'Shede Hageman

MISSISSIPPI



Peria Jerry

MISSOURI



William Moore
Sean Weatherspoon

MONTANA



Kroy Biermann

NEVADA-LAS VEGAS



Joe Hawley

NORTH CAROLINA



T.J. Yates

NORTH GREENVILLE



Freddie Martino

NORTHWESTERN



Jordan Mabin

NOTRE DAME



Zeke Motta
Prince Shembo

OREGON



Drew Davis

OREGON STATE



Steven Jackson
Jacquizz Rodgers

PENN STATE



Mickey Shuler

PURDUE



Ricardo Allen

RICHMOND



Josh Vaughan

SAN JOSE STATE



Dwight Lowery

SOUTH CAROLINA



Patrick DiMarco
Cliff Matthews
Travian Robertson

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE



Kimario McFadden

SOUTH DAKOTA



Tyler Starr

SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA



Robert Alford

SOUTHERN METHODIST



Darius Johnson

SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI



Lamar Holmes

STANFORD



Levine Toilolo

SYRACUSE



Jerome Smith
Marquis Spruill

TENNESSEE



Jacques Smith
James Stone

TEXAS



Justin Blalock

TEXAS A&M



Jake Matthews

TEXAS CHRISTIAN



Stansly Maponga

TEXAS STATE



Joplo Bartu

TOLEDO



Bernard Reedy

TROY



Jonathan Massaquoi
Osi Umenyiora

USC



Sam Baker

UTAH



Paul Soliai

UTAH STATE



Devonta Glover-Wright

VALDOSTA STATE



Ryan Schraeder

VANDERBILT



Walker May

WASHINGTON



Desmond Trufant

WEST TEXAS A&M



Sergio Castillo

WISCONSIN



Gabe Carimi
Peter Konz
Jacob Pedersen
Dezmen Southward
Brian Wozniak



Falcons In The Community

The Falcons organization gives back to metro Atlanta and the state of Georgia in a variety of ways

Atlanta Falcons Youth Foundation

The Atlanta Falcons Youth Foundation (AFYF) was established in 1985 to serve as the philanthropic arm of the Atlanta Falcons. Since Arthur Blank acquired the Atlanta Falcons in 2002, AFYF has grown to be the largest owner-funded foundation in the National Football League, providing more than \$20 million in grants to nonprofit organizations across the state of Georgia.

AFYF is taking the issue of childhood obesity head on by investing in nonprofit organizations that are increasing the time kids spend in physical activity and increasing access to healthy, affordable food.

Atlanta Falcons Training Camp Youth Weekend

Atlanta Falcons Training Camp Youth Weekend took place July 27 and July 28, 2013. Activities were open to children ages 17 and under and held one hour before each open practice. Activities included: daily autograph sessions with Atlanta Falcons Cheerleaders, "Look Like A Pro" where children had the chance to try on authentic Atlanta Falcons equipment, "Football Flurry" which allowed young fans the chance to win autographed footballs and "Helmet and Jersey Frenzy" which allowed young fans the chance to win autographed mini helmets and autographed jerseys.

Atlanta Falcons First Down for Fitness

Presented by Kimberly-Clark Professional, the employees of Marsh & McLennan and Publix Supermarkets

In its eighth year, the program ran from September 3 through November 29, 2013. The program is designed to challenge students in grades three through seven to participate in physical fitness activities and lead healthy lifestyles. In

collaboration with the American Heart Association, the Southeast United Dairy Industry Association (SUDIA) and the NFL's "Play 60" campaign, this incentive-based program rewards participants for being active at least 60 minutes a day, five days a week for three months. This year four schools from Mexico City participated in the program alongside 244 teachers and over 60,000 students across the state of Georgia.

Hometown Huddle

Countless fans and children in gym class got quite the surprise on Tuesday, October 22, 2013. Alongside several Atlanta Falcons Cheerleaders and members of the Atlanta Falcons Women's Association, the Atlanta Falcons made surprise appearances at 13 different locations around metro Atlanta. The Falcons are the only team in the NFL whose entire 53-man roster and practice squad participates in a volunteer project of this nature.

The six appearances included: United Way-affiliated schools where the players and cheerleaders delivered new sports equipment and promoted physical fitness as part of the NFL's "Play 60" initiative, a local Publix Super Market, a local McDonalds, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Eggleston, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Scottish Rite, Ronald McDonald House and Project Open Hand. The Atlanta Falcons Women's Association also prepared and served lunch to the homeless at Crossroads Community Ministries.

Dazzle and Dine

The fifth Annual Dazzle and Dine took place Tuesday, October 1, 2013 and honored breast cancer survivors Chrissy Alonzo, Tammy Bolton, Annie Harris, Shondia Sabari-McFadden and Becky Smith. All of the ladies were treated to a day of pampering and an evening of fine dining with Atlanta Falcons players. The afternoon began with a new hairstyle and make-up application provided by Van Michael Salon. The ladies were transported by limousine courtesy of Cooper-Global to Ray's on the River where their invited guest joined them for dinner with Atlanta Falcons players Justin Blalock, Matt Bryant, Matt Boshier, Chase Coffman, Kevin Cone, Dominique Davis, Thomas DeCoud, Patrick DiMarco, Dominique Franks, Josh Harris, Joe Hawley, Lamar Holmes, Steven Jackson, Peria Jerry, Peter Konz, Robert McClain, Stephen Nicholas, Corey Peters, Travian Robertson and Josh Vaughan. Matt Boshier, whose mother is a breast cancer survivor, addressed the group and spoke about the importance of raising awareness for breast cancer and recognizing the ladies for their efforts. Steven Jackson provided an inspirational message honoring the courage of the ladies. Additionally, the Atlanta Falcons and the NFL Foundation provided a local non-profit breast cancer awareness organization of the winner's choice with a \$1,000 grant in their name. Belk provided an additional \$1,900 grant to the local non-profit breast cancer awareness organization.





Community Quarterback Award

The Atlanta Falcons Community Quarterback Award honors volunteers in Georgia (ages 13 and over) who exemplify leadership and dedication to bettering their communities. Each month during the 2013 season, September through December, an Atlanta Falcons Community Quarterback of the month winner was selected by a panel of civic and non-profit leaders. Each winner received a \$1,000 grant from the NFL Foundation to support the organization served. Four incredible individuals were selected as this year's recipients: September: Garland Jones- Crowned for Victory, Inc., October: Bernadette Birch- Cool Girls, Inc., November: Abhinav Sharma- Coaching Corps, December: Perry Mitchell- Literacy Volunteers of Atlanta, Inc.

FalCan Food Drive School Challenge Presented by Publix Supermarkets and UnitedHealthcare

The Atlanta Falcons, Publix Supermarkets, UnitedHealthcare and the Atlanta Community Food Bank (ACFB) hosted the annual FalCan Food Drive School Challenge from October 1 through November 8, 2013. Ninety-two schools signed up to participate in the FalCan Food Drive School Challenge and collected 125,116 pounds of canned goods and/or non-perishable items. The total amount collected in 2013 doubled last year's numbers going up an additional 64,452 pounds to establish a new record.

From October 1 through November 1, fans had the opportunity to donate to the FalCan Food Drive through an easy online donation system. Including the online donations, the efforts of the FalCan Food Drive School Challenge and the Food for Sharing Program, 246,598 pounds of canned goods and/or non-perishable food items were collected for the community.

Toys for Tots

As a standing tradition, fans supported the Atlanta Falcons Toys for Tots drive prior to the Atlanta Falcons vs. Washington Redskins game on Sunday, December 15. With donations of



over 1,000 toys and more than \$20,000, together the Atlanta Falcons and the U.S. Marine Corps were able to provide deserving families with special toys during the holiday season.

Atlanta Falcons Fitness Flag Crew

During each Atlanta Falcons home game, 60 participants were selected to assist in unfurling an oversized 40 yard by 40 yard Atlanta Falcons flag as a part of the Atlanta Falcons game day experience right before kickoff. These participants included schools, military personnel, youth football teams and civic/non-profit organizations. The Atlanta Falcons Fitness Flag Crew experience provided each individual with a t-shirt, ticket to the game and the opportunity to partake in pre-game aerobic warm-ups led by members of the Atlanta Falcons Cheerleaders, an on-field rehearsal and meal. By the conclusion of each experience, participants logged nearly two miles of walking.

Player Appearances

The Atlanta Falcons players have been ac-

tive in the community this season participating in over 865 appearances and logging more than 4,000 hours around the state of Georgia. Visits included a fishing excursion with wounded military veterans, and a Mother's Day/Father's Day Shop at Egleston Children's Hospital in Atlanta. Tony Gonzalez, and the Atlanta Falcons Rookie Club presented by UnitedHealthcare of Georgia, also treated 40 children from the Atlanta Mission to a holiday shopping spree. Additional visits throughout the year included the entire roster celebrating Hometown Huddle by participating in community service all over metro Atlanta, surprise school visits, Atlanta Falcons Gatorade Junior Training Camps, hospital visits and serving meals to the homeless during the holidays.

Atlanta Falcons Gatorade Junior Training Camps

The Atlanta Falcons conducted Gatorade Junior Training Camps in schools and parks across Georgia with a special emphasis on introducing youth to the fundamentals of football through basic drills and educating them about hydration maintenance. Over 110 camps were conducted across the state and nearly 14,000 children had the opportunity to participate. These camps reached areas of the state including Albany, Augusta, metro Atlanta, Cartersville and Macon.

Atlanta Falcons Cheerleaders

Everyone knows that the Atlanta Falcons Cheerleaders perform at each home game, but what most may not know is that throughout 2013 the cheerleaders appeared at over 300 community events across the state of Georgia. These events included speaking engagements to promote physical fitness and education, stops at hospitals, schools, homeless shelters and even military bases to name a few.

Atlanta Falcons Junior Cheerleaders

Young ladies ages 5-16 had the opportunity to cheer for their home team by participating in the Atlanta Falcons Junior Cheerleaders Program. There were no tryouts required to partic-





ipate and all skill levels were accepted. Nearly 300 young girls performed in front of tens of thousands of fans during halftime of the Atlanta Falcons vs. Washington Redskins game on December 15th. Participants also contributed to a letter writing campaign to US troops overseas and Toys for Tots.

Participants of the program received a game day uniform, autographed 2013 Atlanta Falcons Cheerleader poster, pom poms, practice t-shirt, three instructional clinics taught by the Atlanta Falcons Cheerleaders and a tailgate party on performance day.

Atlanta Falcons Women's Association

This season was filled with several events and volunteer opportunities for the Atlanta Falcons Women's Association. Over the course of the season members had major roles in the following initiatives:

Hometown Huddle: members of the Atlanta Falcons Women's Association visited the Crossroads Community Ministries to prepare and serve food to the homeless.

Eagle Ranch: members of the Atlanta Falcons Women's Association visited Eagle Ranch Children's Home to assist with a number of projects including creating welcome baskets for new children and their families and assisting with the organization and stocking of the on-site grocery store.

Toys for Tots Warehouse: members of the Atlanta Falcons Women's Association visited the Toys for Tots Warehouse to sort donated toys for distribution.

Atlanta Falcons Rookie Club Sponsored by UnitedHealthcare of Georgia

The Atlanta Falcons Rookie Club is designed to expose and immerse the rookie class into the metro Atlanta community and involve them in different community activities. Throughout the season, the Atlanta Falcons Rookie Club served a special holiday meal to the homeless, visited with patients at the Shepherd Center in Atlanta, delivered meals to senior citizens in Hall County and participated in activities with children at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Scottish Rite in Atlanta.

Rise Up Atlanta Presented by YP

The Falcons have partnered with Hands On Atlanta, one of the largest community-based volunteer service organizations in the United States, in an effort to encourage volunteerism across the city of Atlanta. All year, special Rise Up Atlanta volunteer projects were featured on riseupatlanta.com. The four Rise Up Atlanta event locations included:

- Ashby Circle Playlot: Players and volunteers helped in a beautification project which included activities such as building birdhouses and installing benches.
- Washington Park: Players and volunteers helped in a beautification project which included building a small pavilion, hillside



restoration and installing new swing.

- Atlanta Community Food Bank: Players and volunteers helped sort donated food items from the FalCan Food Drive.
- City of Refuge: Players and volunteers helped with small maintenance projects, sorting donated supplies and preparing lunch for women and children at the shelter.

Donations

Throughout the year, the Community Relations Department donated autographed items in support of charity events/programs/activities to official 501(c)3 non-profit organizations and schools within the state of Georgia. Beneficiaries must support youth and/or focus on health, arts, physical fitness and/or education. In 2012, local organizations were able to raise over \$40,000.

Salute to Georgia High School Football Reception

The sixth annual Salute to Georgia High School Football Reception took place Saturday, December 14 at the Georgia Dome Owner's Club. Approximately 250 Georgia High School

head football coaches and their guests were on hand to enjoy a special reception that included a meal, the opportunity to mingle with fellow coaches as well as the 2013 Classification Coaches of the Year, Warrick Dunn Captain in the Community of the Year and the Lifetime Achievement winner. They are as follows:

Coach of the Year

- 1A - Mike Forester // Mount Pisgah Christian School
- 2A - Mike Muschamp // The Lovett School
- 3A - Frank Barden // Cartersville High School
- 4A - Matt Fligg // Monroe Area High School
- 5A - Olten Downs // Creekside High School
- 6A - Andy Dyer // Archer High School

Warrick Dunn Captain in the Community of the Year Winner

- Adam Riley // Central Gwinnett High School

Lifetime Achievement Award Winner

- T. McFerrin // Jefferson High School

Falcons Captain in the Community Presented By Russell Athletics

The Captain in the Community program presented by Russell Athletic recognized outstanding varsity high school football student-athletes around the state of Georgia who demonstrated strong leadership skills both on and off the field. The program encouraged these student-athletes to continue to be leaders in their communities.

During the 2013 high school football season, the Atlanta Falcons honored 10 varsity football student-athletes who excelled on the field, in the classroom and in their communities. The winners were selected by members of the USA Football staff. In order to be considered for the Atlanta Falcons Captain in the Community award, the high school varsity football student-athlete had to have a 3.0 or higher grade point average and demonstrate a voluntary community service record (i.e. camp instructor, participation in school food drive/toys for tots program, mission trips, visits to nursing homes/hospitals, involvement with Boys & Girls Club/YMCA programs or other service projects.)

Winners received a commemorative game ball and their high school received a \$1,000

grant to support future community initiatives. The 2013 Atlanta Falcons Captain in the Community presented by Russell Athletic winners:

- Daniel McCrary, a quarterback at Lumpkin County High School in Dahlonega, GA
- Wade Whitley, an offensive and defensive tackle at Atkinson County High School in Pearson, GA
- Brackin Smith, an offensive and defensive lineman at North Oconee High School in Bogart, GA
- A.J. Wells, a kicker and punter at Marion County High School in Buena Vista, GA
- Michael Santamaria, a kicker, quarterback and punter at Athens Academy in Athens, GA
- Adam Riley, a cornerback, receiver, and kick/punt returner at Central Gwinnett High School in Lawrenceville, GA
- Jacob Gross, a middle linebacker, tight end and fullback at Upson-Lee High School in Thomaston, GA
- Seth Short, a quarterback and punter at Flint River Academy in Woodbury, GA
- Jocques Ross, a wide receiver at Langston Hughes High School in Fairburn, GA
- Israel Strickland, an inside linebacker at Douglas County High School in Douglasville, GA



Falcons Coach of the Week Presented By Russell Athletics

Every year the Atlanta Falcons honor high school head football coaches through the NFL's Coach of the Week program. Coach of the Week presented by Russell Athletic recognizes high school coaches who, through their hard work and dedication to young people, have made a difference in the lives of their players, community and school. The program also provides high schools with financial assistance to help maintain and upgrade their football programs.

Each week of the season, the winner received a plaque signed by Atlanta Falcons Head Coach Mike Smith, a commemorative game ball and a \$1,000 grant from the NFL's Youth Football Fund to his school's athletic department.

The 2013 Coach of the Week winners:

- Paul Standard of St. Pius X Catholic High School located in Atlanta, GA
- Dexter Copeland of Baldwin High School located in Milledgeville, GA
- Dave Svehla of Etowah High School located in Woodstock, GA
- Derek Cook of Carlton J. Kell High School located in Marietta, GA
- Andy Dyer of Archer High School located in Lawrenceville, GA
- Seth Rogers of Temple High School located in Temple, GA
- Benji Harrison of Jackson County High School located in Jefferson, GA
- Rick Hurst of Eastside High School located in Covington, GA
- Scott Hamilton of Paulding County High School located in Dallas, GA
- Andy Scott of Kennesaw Mountain High School located in Kennesaw, GA
- John Ford of Roswell High School located in Roswell, GA
- Nic Vasilchek of Luella High School located in Locust Grove, GA

Youth Team and Cheer Squad of the Week

The Youth Team and Cheer Squad of the Week program recognized youth football teams and cheer squads throughout the state of Georgia. One team was selected weekly beginning early September through mid-November.

Each team of the week/cheer squad of the week received t-shirts and a grant in the amount of \$1,000 to support their organization.

The 2013 Youth Team of the Week/Cheer Squad of the Week winners:

- Cousins Middle School, a cheerleading squad located in Covington, GA
- Wallace Park Falcons, a 9 and under youth football team located in Austell, GA
- Steeler Cheerleaders, a 10 and under cheerleading squad located in Locust Grove, GA
- Georgia Supreme Athletics, an 11 and under youth football team located in College Park, GA
- McDonough Bulldog Cheerleaders, a youth

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- McDonald Stallions, a 9 and under youth football team located in Sharpsburg, GA
- Fabulous Flames, a special needs youth cheer squad located in Cumming, GA
- Lithonia Park Tigers, a 6 and under youth football team located in Lithonia, GA
- Long County Middle School, a youth cheer squad located in Ludowici, GA
- The Program, a 10 and under youth football team located in Grovetown, GA

Refurbished Football Equipment Grants

Seventeen youth football organizations, middle and/or high schools around the state of Georgia were awarded refurbished football equipment grants totaling \$16,900.

The 2013 Refurbished Football Equipment grant recipients:

- Blackwell Bears Athletic Association (Marietta, GA)
- Centennial Junior Knights (Roswell, GA)
- Cousins Middle School (Covington, GA)
- DeKalb Yellow Jackets Youth Football Association, Inc. (Lithonia, GA)
- Georgia Elite Sports Academy, Inc. (Locust Grove, GA)
- Lumpkin County High School (Dahlonega, GA)
- Memorial Day School (Savannah, GA)
- North Murray High School (Chatsworth, GA)
- North Oconee High School Titan Club (Bogart, GA)
- Oconee County Parks and Recreation Department (Watkinsville, GA)
- Paulding County Junior Patriots (Dallas, GA)
- River Ridge Junior Knights (Woodstock, GA)
- Sandy Creek Patriots Touchdown Club (Tyrone, GA)
- Shiloh Touchdown Club (Snellville, GA)
- South Atlanta Educational Complex (Atlanta, GA)
- Sprayberry Junior Jackets (Marietta, GA)
- Tri Cities High School (East Point, GA)

Atlanta Falcons Community Honors Dinner

The fourth annual Atlanta Falcons Community Honors Dinner was held Monday, December 16 at Ray's on the River in Sandy Springs. This special evening recognized the Atlanta Falcons Community Quarterback Award winners of the month and the Atlanta Falcons Community All-Star of the month winners. Additionally, the Atlanta Falcons announced the 2013 Community Quarterback MVP and 2013 Walter Payton Man of the Year winner.

The Atlanta Falcons Community Quarterback Award honors volunteers in Georgia (ages 13 and over) who exemplify leadership and dedication to bettering their communities. Each month during the 2013 season, September through December, an Atlanta Falcons Community Quarterback of the month winner was selected by a panel of civic and non-profit leaders. Each winner received a \$1,000 grant from the NFL Foundation to support the organization served. During the event, one of the Community Quarterback winners was selected as the 2013 Atlanta Falcons Community Quarterback MVP and received an additional \$4,000 grant from the NFL Foundation to support the organization served. The nominees were: Garland Jones, Bernadette Birch, Abhinav Sharma and Perry Mitchell. Garland Jones was announced as the 2013

Atlanta Falcons Community Quarterback MVP.

The Atlanta Falcons Community All-Star of the month program recognizes a player each month that has shown a strong dedication to giving back to the community. Each winner has been heavily engaged in team and/or their own community initiatives.

The Atlanta Falcons Man of the Year award recognizes a player's off-the-field community service. Each team in the NFL nominates one player from their organization for this prestigious honor. The winner was considered in the final selection of the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year award which was announced during halftime of the Super Bowl XLVIII. During the event, one of the Atlanta Falcons Community All-Star of the month winners was selected as the winner of the 2013 Atlanta Falcons Walter Payton Man of the Year. The nominees were: Jonathan Massaquoi, Corey Peters, Matt Bryant and Joe Hawley. Matt Bryant was selected as the 2013 Atlanta Falcons Walter Payton Man of the Year.

In attendance were several former Atlanta Falcons Man of the Year winners: Matt Boshier, Buddy Curry, Michael Haynes, Corey Peters and Jessie Tuggle. Matt Boshier, the 2012 Atlanta Falcons Walter Payton Man of the Year, announced Matt Bryant as the 2013 Atlanta Falcons Walter Payton Man of the Year. ///



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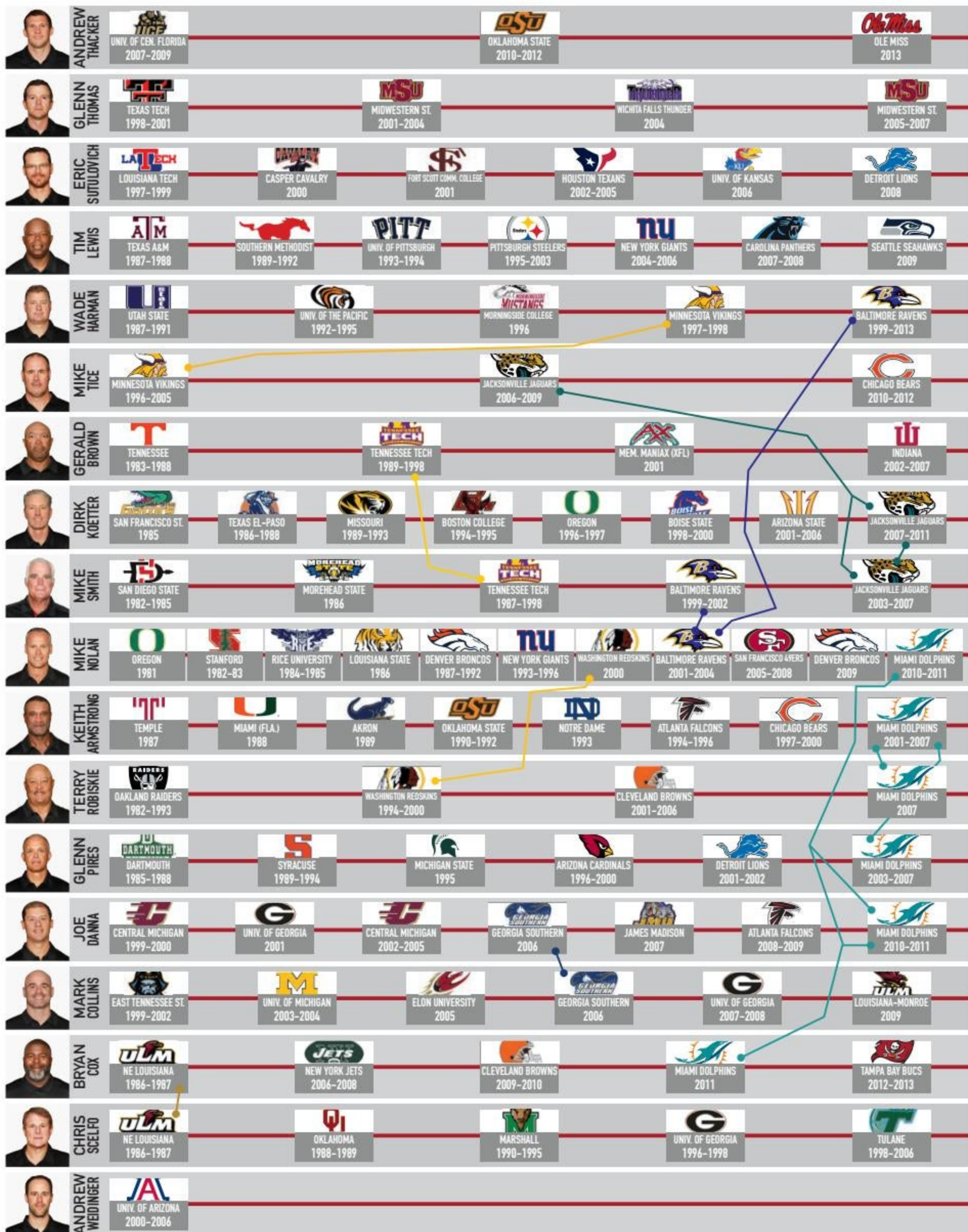
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Freeman vs. Dunn

By Brian Jones

Falcons fourth-round running back selection reminds many of Atlanta legend Warrick Dunn

Warrick Dunn will be remembered as one of the great Falcons players that achieved success on and off the field. After spending seven seasons with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, he helped the Falcons reach the divisional round of the NFL playoffs in 2002 and the NFC Championship Game in 2004 during his six-year stint. One of the reasons for Dunn's success was his ability to learn the game when he was at Florida State while playing for legendary coach Bobby Bowden.

Today, the Falcons are looking to do the same thing when they drafted Devonta Freeman. The former Florida State running back was a major contributor in the Seminoles' national championship run last year as he rushed for over 1,000 yards, making him the first Florida State player to achieve that since Dunn did it in 1996. And like Dunn, Freeman led the team in rushing his three seasons at FSU.

When Dunn came to the Falcons in 2002, he was expected to be a major player on offense and help the Falcons get to the playoffs for the first time since 1998. He was able to do that as he rushed for 927 yards and four touchdowns. Freeman is coming to the Falcons looking to help bolster an already potent offense, but he's also looking to help the team get back on the winning track. And with him being a major contributor to the Seminoles' BCS Championship run, he feels like he can do just that.

"I'm all about perfection, consistency and I'll always be persistent," Freeman said. "If somebody tells me no, I can't do this, I'm going to always be persistent and say 'yes, I can.' I know what it takes to win."

SECRET TO SUCCESS

One of the reasons Dunn had a lot of success in the NFL is his ability to play three downs every series, despite being one of the best third-down backs in the League at the time. And with teams starting to split carries with two or three running backs during a game because of the lack of three-down backs, having a back that can play all three downs will be essential for the Falcons moving forward.

"I feel like that's one of the main things I've been working on even since I was in college," Freeman added. "I know my size. There's a lot of players that are way bigger than me. So that's one of the things I work on the most. I just try to perfect my craft."

Because Dunn was able to be a three-down back, he was able to rush for more than 11,000 yards during his 12-year career as well as be a three-time First Team All-ACC selection at Florida State. Freeman, who was a First Team All-ACC selection last season, understands that it will be more of a challenge having success in the NFL.

"It's going to be way, way harder," Freeman said. "Everybody's a pro so there is no room for mistakes. If you make a mistake, that means your job is on the line. I feel like it's going to be way harder."

Dunn also knew that when he got to the NFL, he had to fight for everything he had because of size (5-foot-9, 187 pounds). In his rookie year of 1997, he was named Offensive Rookie of the Year and was selected to the Pro Bowl team after tallying 978 rushing yards and 462 receiving yards. But even though Dunn had to fight for everything he had that

year, the expectations were high because he was drafted 12th overall by Tampa Bay.

Freeman was a fourth-round selection for the Falcons, but like Dunn, the expectations are high for him because he is looked at as the team's future. Freeman, who is also a smaller back (5-foot-8, 206 pounds), looks up to Dunn and has even gotten advice from him this off-season on what to do on and off the field.

"He's just one of those guys I've looked up to," Freeman said. "I just watched what he does for families and how he gives back to the community. That's something I really want to do and try to help out and show kids who come from less fortunate situations that it's possible. I was one of those kids and I just want to let a lot of people see my story and do what Warrick Dunn did and what he did on the field. He was about his business and that's one thing I take very serious. I just want to follow his footsteps."

Dunn had to be the caretaker of the family before he enrolled in Florida State. Before his 18th birthday, his mom, a police officer was murdered in 1993 by armed robbers. Freeman never had to go through what Dunn went through more than 20 years ago, but he had to take care of his family while attending school.

"My mom, brothers and sisters stayed with me at Florida State," Freeman said. "I had a close bond with them since I was real young. So by me leaving them, that's the only thing I miss. One day I'm going to move them up here with me."

There is no telling if Freeman will have the same success as Dunn but based on what he did at Florida State and what the Falcons need on offense, the Falcons and Freeman make a perfect fit just like the Falcons and Dunn did back in 2002.

"I feel like this plan is going to work out the best more than a lot of other guys that got drafted before me," Freeman said. "I feel like this was the best opportunity for me." ///



	HT	WGT	AT FSU	RINGS	WITH FALCONS
Warrick Dunn	5-9	187	1993-1996	1993 National Champ	2002-2007
Devonta Freeman	5-9	209	2011-2013	2013 National Champ	2014-

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Battle Royale

By Stephen Black

Falcons open season at home for the first time since 2009 as rival Saints come calling

The Falcons and Saints go back a long way. The teams have been arch rivals since the Saints began playing football in 1967, a year after their southern neighbors from Georgia had already played a season.

There are many rivalries in the NFL, but perhaps no other has been as competitive and consistently heated as Falcons-Saints. Sure, neither team did much in their first few years in the League, but they still had the rivalry. While being eliminated from playoff contention halfway through the season was normal in the early days, Atlanta and New Orleans had each other to look forward to, games in which each team bussed fans in for the road games and typically drew large, spirited crowds.

This year is the first since 1981 that the Falcons have hosted New Orleans in the season-opener. While the Birds have travelled to New Orleans to open the season in 1984 and 2013 (and also were the unlucky team selected to play at New Orleans in the Saints first game back in the Superdome after Hurricane Katrina in 2006), Atlanta has waited quite some time to get its bitter enemy at home in Week 1.

In addition to the obvious emotional aspect at stake in this game, there is also the mathematical angle. The Falcons and Saints have combined to win four of the last five division titles and come into the 2014 season as threats to win it again.

"It's very important on a couple levels," said Falcons Head Coach Mike Smith of the rare home-opener against New Orleans. "First, it's the opening game of the season and you only get one opportunity to make a first impression. Second, it's a division game and we weigh the division games about one-and-a-half times as much as a non-division game. It's just one of the best rivalries in all of football."

HOME COOKIN'

Aside from the team Atlanta opens with, one exciting factor about this game is the fact that it is at home. Smith's teams have kicked off the regular season in Atlanta just twice in his tenure, which began in 2008. In fact, the past four seasons have seen the Falcons travel for the

season-opener.

Opening at home will be a relief for the Falcons, according to Smith.

"There's nothing like starting the season out at home," he said during mini-camp. "It's nice to be in front of your home fans with a new team and a new roster."

In Smith's first two years in Atlanta, the Falcons beat Detroit and Miami in season-openers at home, but they haven't opened a season in the Georgia Dome since. The Saints affair is just the second time the Falcons have ever hosted New Orleans to open the season. The other was in 1981, a 27-0 shellacking in what was an NFC West game at the time. Despite only hosting New Orleans once in an opener, the Falcons have traveled to the Pelican State to open the season six times. Last season's narrow 23-17 defeat was the Falcons' first-ever loss to the Saints in seven total season-openers.

Atlanta leads the all-time series 46-43 despite a recent slow period. The southeastern neighbors were actually in different divisions when New Orleans came into the League in 1967 until 1970, when the two moved into the NFC West. Previously, Atlanta had been in the Coastal Division and New Orleans in the Capitol.

After being largely dominated in the early years of the rivalry, New Orleans swung things in its favor from the mid-80s to the mid-90s. But the Falcons would restore order with a 10-game winning streak that spanned from 1995-1999.

PROFESSIONAL APPROACH

The opener against New Orleans is one of the most anticipated games in franchise history by Falcons fans. Atlanta sports fans count the Saints as one of their most hated teams in all of sports. Add the Saints recent success against Atlanta and you have the recipe for a cauldron of vitriol awaiting New Orleans on Sept. 7.

But the Falcons players, especially the rookies, have a different perspective. While divisional games are important, the rivalries sometimes don't factor into it as much. Preparing for another team and being physically and mentally ready for an NFL game is each player's job every week

throughout the season. For the rookies, just getting used to the NFL lifestyle overtakes any ancillary thoughts.

"I've got to go out and perform and do well," said rookie offensive tackle Jake Matthews. "Obviously, they are two great teams going at it and I've known that from long ago, but I've got enough things to work on myself not as much the rivalry."

In the college game, some clashes are treated differently as conference and in-state rivals tend to take the brunt of the year's preparation. In the NFL, however, every game counts and every team is capable of beating anyone. It is made clear early on to NFL rookies that while some teams are bigger rivals than others, every game is vital.

"Just being out in the community, meeting some of the fans out in the mall, people walk up to me and the first thing they want to talk about is beating the Saints," said rookie defensive back Dezmen Southward. "So obviously, it's a big deal, but we as players know that we approach every game as one single game." ///

FALCONS-SAINTS TALE OF THE TAPE
SERIES
Falcons lead 46-43
SEASON-OPENERS
Falcons lead 6-1
POSTSEASON
Falcons lead 1-0
DIVISION CHAMPIONSHIPS
5 each
SUPER BOWL APPEARANCES
1 each



The Turnaround

By Alex Ewalt

In 2008, the Falcons shocked the NFL by making the playoffs with almost entirely new leadership

After a forgettable 2007 campaign, the Atlanta Falcons franchise was at a crossroads. The previous year had brought the turmoil of quarterback Michael Vick's legal troubles, Head Coach Bobby Petrino's abrupt mid-season departure, and a 4-12 season that seemed to be a sign of several rough years to come.

It was time to regroup.

What happened was a total makeover. In January, Thomas Dimitroff left the New England Patriots to become the Falcons general manager. Later in the month, the team named as head coach Jacksonville Defensive Coordinator Mike Smith, who had led some of the NFL's best defenses since 2003. Neither were household names, but were well respected in NFL circles.

The team let go of mainstays Warrick Dunn, Alge Crumpler and DeAngelo Hall in the offseason, and signed backup San Diego Chargers running back Michael Turner, who had impressed in limited carries behind LaDainian Tomlinson but had never shouldered the load on his own.

The 2008 Draft brought new blood to Flowery Branch. After a spirited public debate over whether the Falcons should draft Boston College quarterback Matt Ryan or LSU defensive tackle Glenn Dorsey at No. 3 overall, the Falcons selected Ryan as the new face of the franchise. (Dorsey, selected by Kansas City two picks later, has never delivered on the promise of his college career).

Ryan's college statistics were stellar: he threw for 4,507 yards and 31 touchdowns as a senior at BC while working with a somewhat pedestrian wide receiving corps. He flashed NFL-level accuracy and the ability to lead, as his Eagles team went 11-3 his final year with an ACC Championship Game appearance and a bowl win. But would the newcomer at quarterback start right away over Chris Redman, Joey Harrington and D.J. Shockley?

It seemed possible that Ryan would begin his career as an apprentice after the veteran Redman won the start in the preseason opener. But as August wore on, it was clear that Smith and the coaching staff wanted to throw the rookie into the fire, naming him the starter before the final preseason game.

The selection of Ryan was universally lauded and the draft class graded well, according to the experts. But leading up to the 2008 campaign, the Atlanta Falcons weren't just overlooked; they were still tabbed a major work in progress. In the eyes of many, the woes of the 2007 season wouldn't easily be overcome.

2007	lost six of seven games to end season	2008	won five of six games to end regular season



The 23-year-old rookie under center had shown poise in preseason play, such as his 15-of-21 performance in a win over Tennessee, but the pundits weren't buying. Sports Illustrated predicted a 2-14 record; Sporting News predicted a historically bad mark of 1-15, which would have tied for the worst ever at the time. Nary a pundit predicted that the Falcons would finish anything but fourth in the NFC South, where the New Orleans Saints and Carolina Panthers had emerged as favorites.

The regular season started out with a home win over the Detroit Lions, 34-21. Turner exploded for a team-record 220 yards rushing with two scores. Ryan was an efficient, if not eye-popping, 9-of-13 for 161 yards and a touchdown on his first NFL pass.

We knew we had something, but how good were they?

Perhaps the turning point of the season — and Ryan's early career — came in Weeks 5 and 6. Going into that stretch 2-2, the Falcons faced a pair of tough NFC North opponents in the Green Bay Packers and Chicago Bears. Ryan's connection with Roddy White, quickly becoming into a superstar wide receiver, was blossoming. The duo upstaged QB Aaron Rodgers at Lambeau Field to break .500 at 3-2. Then, the following week, the rookie quarterback showed his penchant for overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds late in the game.

With just 11 seconds to go and the Bears leading 20-19 after a Chicago touchdown, the Falcons benefited from a recovered squib kick at their own 44. Then, Ryan tossed a perfect deep-out pass to Michael Jenkins with just one second left. Kicker Jason Elam, himself a new signee, nailed the 48-yard field goal to move the Falcons to 4-2.

The stunning comeback win also moved the meter in a city that needed a rebound. The national media, which had just months before buried the franchise for the next several years, took notice.

After the dramatic win over Chicago, the Falcons went on to finish 11-5 and earn a Wild Card spot. The team finished 3-3 in the South, the most competitive division in football that year, after starting 0-2 against their regional foes. Double-digit wins over the Saints and Panthers in the second half of the season gave the Birds a boost leading up to their improbable playoff berth.

The dream season ended in Arizona when the Falcons fell late, 30-24, to a team that would come a hair's length from a Super Bowl title.

Despite the disappointing playoff loss, validation for the turnaround season came in the coming weeks as Smith was named AP Coach of the Year and Dimitroff was named Sporting News Executive of the Year.

As the Falcons look to 2014, they will once again need to shrug off modest expectations and the sting of a losing season, their first since that trying '07 campaign. But if Ryan, White, Smith and the rest of that turnaround team from six years ago have their way, the Falcons will be right back in the thick of it. ///



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Atlanta Falcons Cheerleaders

By Craig Sager II

Atlanta Falcons Cheerleaders bring energy and talent to sidelines, support and service to community

Just like the Falcons roster each year, there are newcomers to the Atlanta Falcons Cheerleaders roster that are making their professional debuts and it is up to the veterans to exemplify what it takes to fill the role. The Falconettes got the tradition brewing in the 1960's and the sidelines have been beautified and energized by Falcons cheerleaders ever since.

The physical demands of a rehearsal and the game-day routines are only a fraction of what is required by each individual. The appearances and work in the community is where the real balancing act takes place and this is a challenge that this year's 36 Falcons cheerleaders embrace. There is nothing like game day to a professional cheerleader, but a preseason and regular season typically guarantees just 10 home games.

Community always comes first in the world of Falcons cheerleading and before they ever pick up the pom-poms, their desire to make a difference in the community was already a part of their life. They share this passion and becoming a Falcons cheerleader is a way for them to combine forces and enhance their involvement.

Chato Hendrix is the Falcons cheerleading coordinator. She has been a Falcons cheerleader or coordinator for the past 17 years and represents everything the organization stands for. Hendrix made the team in 1998 and cheered the Falcons all the way to Super Bowl XXXIII while completing grad school. Her dedication to the cheerleading experience and life off the field and in the community makes her the perfect mentor and role model for the cheerleaders to look up to. Chato completed her doctorate in Psychology this past year and married Doug Hendrix in April of 2012. Doug's proposal to Chato had plenty of Falcons flavor to it and it came in front of a sold out Georgia Dome in 2011 when he took a knee and popped the question during Atlanta's 23-17 win over the Titans.

Chato has seen the tradition build and allow the bar to rise each season within the cheerleading squad and the organization as a whole.

"In 1998 when I made the team, the organization and individuals in charge did an excellent job of letting us know that we are community first," said Chato. "We've continued that legacy of working in our community and reaching out to the fans and giving them the ultimate fan experience."

COMING TOGETHER

Chato has become an expert on how the cheerleaders fit it in with their busy every day lives. In order to make it work, she makes sure everyone gets a head start on planning every week of the season.

"We take pride in structure," said Hendrix. "It is not often that we have last minute events". We plan our year a year in advance so the ladies know exactly when rehearsals will take place, where they will take place and the game times and time of arrival, etc."

Getting 36 cheerleaders in sync takes practice and it starts in what Chato refers to as "training camp" in the summer.

"When they make the team, they are given routines by our team choreographer, Jakene Ashford (a former AFC) to start learning so when they come to what we call training camp in June and July they will have the opportunity to learn the choreography before arriving," explained Hendrix. "Then they work the next 2 months to mesh and gel as a team."

With the choreographer's assistance, the team gets its routine down efficiently each week and they make sure every genre of music is covered within the season. In addition to their own routines, the Falcons cheerleaders also help coach the junior cheerleaders, which get the chance to perform with them during a game each season. This program has seen tremendous growth as well.

"The junior cheerleaders program is such a great experience because a lot of the instructors are actual Atlanta Falcons Cheerleaders so the girls get an opportunity to not only perform with them at a game each year, but also attend clinics and have interactions with these girls," said Hen-

drix. "Knowing that you play a role in someone becoming a Falcons cheerleader 10 years down the line is very rewarding."

CHEER-MAZING

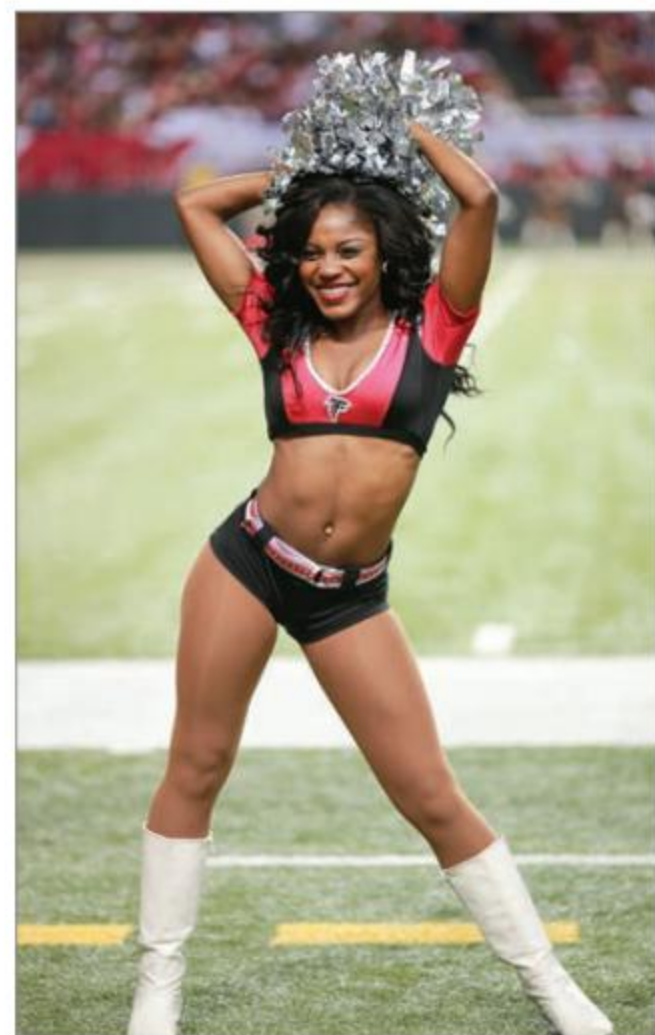
Being a professional cheerleader creates lifelong friendships and memories and Chato can remember exactly what it was like preparing for her first ever game.

"I can remember being at the Dome five hours early," Chato said. "I was in grad school when I made the team and I was a little nervous in class before the game. There is nothing like the game day excitement."

On the field they are Falcons cheerleaders, but they represent the Falcons in all aspects of their lives and while striving for that same level of excellence. Within this year's team are banking analysts, executive assistants, account executives, certified personal accountants, a ministry founder, a brand ambassador, real estate agents, full-time students, a public health research chemist and a business development manager to name a few. Then there is Rie O. who came to Atlanta from Japan with the dream of being a Falcons cheerleader. This is Rie's third season on the squad and she went from arriving in America with just a visa to her current position as a recruiter specialized to help Japanese-English bilingual people find employment.

The Falcons home game in London this year presents a first for the organization and the cheerleaders will get to share the Falcons experience that has been built by decades of tradition and dedication to a new audience.

"Interacting with the fans in London and other NFL employees will definitely be a positive experience," explained Chato. "We are going to take what only the fans in the Dome get to see and take that over to London and share a part of our Falcons pride with them." ///



2014 ATLANTA FALCONS CHEERLEADERS



Row 1: (Front) Dana, Ariel, Kat, Denita, Alice, Cecilia, Sydney, Natalie, Kristen Row 2: Rie, Brianna, Hope, Naiz, Jasmine, Jess, Micki, Leslie, Kiley Row 3: Aleria, Amy, Bethany, Cara, Alexa, Kelsey, Kayla, Allison, Macy Row 4: Megan, Cayla, Colleen, Kiva, AnneMarie, Nicole, Taneshia, Lindsey, Alexandria
Cheerleader Coordinator: Chato B. Hendrix
Cheerleader
Choreographer: Jakene T. Ashford
Sponsors: Atlanta Dental Spa, Flywheel, Gotta Dance Atlanta, GTM Sportswear, DASS Hair Salon, LA Fitness, Midtown Athletic Club, Palm Beach Tan, Inc, Pur Minerals Cosmetics, Rebel Athletic, StylePlus/Algy Team Shoes, Ultratress





Important Announcement

By Craig Sager II

Presented By **EQUIFAX**

Season ticket holder wins trip to New York City for 2014 draft, announces Freeman pick from podium

The NFL Draft is one of the most anticipated days of the year to the loyal football fan. To the 256 players selected in the draft, it is one of the most anticipated days of their lives. Every aspiring pro football player dreams of the moment his name is called on draft day. Very few people will ever actually experience this moment and even less get to be on stage announcing the pick and sharing it with the player. The Falcons Draft Contest Winner presented by Equifax gets to be a part of this incredible event.

CHICKEN DINNER

Lilton Moore was this year's lucky winner out of a pool of more than 10,000 entries and he flew to New York City to announce Atlanta's fourth-round draft pick. Moore, a Falcons season ticket holder for almost a decade, found out he had won days before the draft and he and his wife packed their bags without hesitation en route to the Big Apple.

"I couldn't believe I won," said Moore. "After watching the draft all these years and seeing all the history come through that stage, it was surreal to think I was actually going to be on that same stage and be a part of all the history."

During the first two days of the draft, Moore was the team's special guest and he sat amongst a crowd of NFL Hall of Famers, front office execs and thousands of rowdy fans watching the draft unfold.

"I don't think I've ever been around that many diehard fans before," joked Moore. "The atmosphere and scale of the draft was incredible."

The infamous green room where the top potential picks sit and wait to be called to the stage was something that Moore was especially interested in seeing first hand. According to his behind the scenes encounter, Moore watched players get measured for their hat sizes before the picks were made. According to Moore, this is the process that ensures each pick is handed their new team hat for the first time with a perfect fit.

"I always wondered how they could hand the player the hat on stage and it would already

fit perfectly," Moore chuckled. "Seeing the little things like that and how everything involved in the process unfolds was what made this experience so unique."

Thursday and Friday were spent soaking in the moment, but when Saturday came around it was time for Moore's big moment.

"I really hadn't thought too much about what it would be like on stage," said Moore. "It was all about enjoying the experience and the rest of the trip. My main goal the whole time was to go out there and represent the Falcons the best way possible. Once I woke up and headed down to Radio City Music Hall, the focus turned to that moment."

FAMILIAR NAME

Out of the 256 players drafted, there are plenty of names that are difficult to pronounce. Last year's contest winner, Cliff Ross, for example was handed two difficult pronunciations for his announcements in Malliciah Goodman and Levine Toilolo.

Moore would have no problem pronouncing this year's fourth-rounder and he knew it the second he received the message that pronouncing Devonta Freeman, a name very familiar to him as a State fan.

Moore grew up in Florida and has followed Florida State football since he can remember. Some of his all-time favorite Seminoles (Deion Sanders, Warrick Dunn) have played for the Falcons and welcoming Freeman to the Falcons during his big moment was the perfect scenario for Moore. The clock ticked down and Moore stepped up to the podium to deliver the pick to packed house at Radio City Music Hall and welcome Freeman to his new home.

"First off, I thought it was a great pick," said Moore. "I really liked this year's draft class as a whole and I am honored to say I was part of it. When I found out the pick was Freeman, I was definitely excited. He's a special player and the first thing I thought about was how exciting it will be watching him on the Falcons."

Right after Moore announced the pick, his phone began to blow up with calls and text messages from family and friends. He got plenty of compliments for his flawless delivery of the selection, but Moore said the majority of the calls were about the pick itself and how excited his friends were to see Freeman on the Falcons.

Moore said the trip to New York was better than he could've imagined. The hospitality was amazing and Tameka Rish, Manager of Corporate Partnerships with the Falcons, was the most gracious of hosts, according to Moore.

The memories and experience from the trip will change the way Moore watches the draft and it will feel a little different this year when he's heading to his seats in the Dome knowing that he represented the entire organization on May 10 on the NFL's biggest offseason stage.

When it comes to the NFL's 2014 draft class, the picks all enter history together. It doesn't matter if a pick turns out to be a situational player, a fan favorite or even a Hall of Famer. They will always be members of the 2014 draft class together. The same is to be said for Moore, who through the Falcons Draft Contest, represented the organization and became a part of the Falcons 2014 draft class. ///



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New Atlanta Stadium

By Stephen Black

Falcons break ground on world-class facility with powerful, triumphant ceremony

The new Atlanta stadium will not just be another football facility. The stadium will serve as home to the Falcons as well as Atlanta's newly-awarded Major League Soccer franchise. The \$1.2 billion facility will seat 71,000 fans and will have the capacity to host marquee events like the Super Bowl, FIFA World Cup and NCAA Final Four. It is scheduled to open in 2017.

"We set our standards very high," said Falcons President & CEO Rich McKay. "We're not trying to build the next stadium, we're trying to build an iconic stadium that makes a statement for Atlanta, not for the next 5, 10 or 15 years, but for a long, long time. There are plenty of elements to the stadium that are really cool, but in looking at the entire package, we're trying to build something that's truly world class."

A bevy of national sports personalities and local celebrities gathered to celebrate the groundbreaking of the new stadium on May 19. Preliminary construction work was taking place on the future stadium grounds, so the event took place just across the street from the new stadium site.

The ceremony was a sight to behold. The audience was given 3D glasses to wear during a video presentation featuring a Falcon flying through Atlanta and ending up at midfield of the new stadium. Pyrotechnics surrounded the screen throughout the presentation. The speakers' podium was shaped like a large Falcons logo, which sank into the stage before the video. It made for a groundbreaking like no other.

"I've been to about three of four of them, but none quite like this," said McKay. "They did a really nice job. The 'other' Roddy White (Falcons

Vice President of Events) did a real nice job."

Following the video and fireworks, Falcons Owner & Chairman Arthur Blank, McKay, Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, MLS Commissioner Don Garber and several other key members of the stadium project donned shiny silver work helmets, grabbed brand-new shovels and began the ceremonial digging.

FAMILY AFFAIR

Blank and McKay were joined by all of the Falcons top brass for the ceremony. Similar to his demeanor at the MLS Atlanta announcement in April, Blank seemed giddy that the day had finally arrived. The dapper owner made it clear that the stadium was being built not just for the Falcons, but to host many other sports and en-





tainment events as well.

"Atlanta needs a stadium for a variety of reasons," said Blank. "One is to secure the National Football League franchise here for the next 35-40 years. We also now have a Major League Soccer franchise. We want to create a competitive environment in Atlanta so that we can compete (to host) the SEC Championship game, the Chick-fil-A (Peach) Bowl, NCAA Final Fours, and, hopefully, compete for the FIFA World Cup when it's back in the United States, as a host city, and a Super Bowl as well."

The Super Bowl theme was obvious throughout the evening as Commissioner Goodell, Mayor Reed and Blank mentioned it in their speeches. Reed and Blank both made references to getting the NFL's crowning jewel of a game back to Atlanta for the third time.

"I'd like to extend an open invitation for (Goodell) to come back any time he likes, especially if he wants to announce that we're going to win the Super Bowl (host bid)," joked Reed.

Blank tried to dispel the memory of Atlanta's last Super Bowl (2000), which had prob-

lems due to icy conditions and poor weather around the city.

"This weather is normal for Atlanta year-round," he joked of the perfect 75-degree conditions in mid-May.

UNCLE ARTHUR

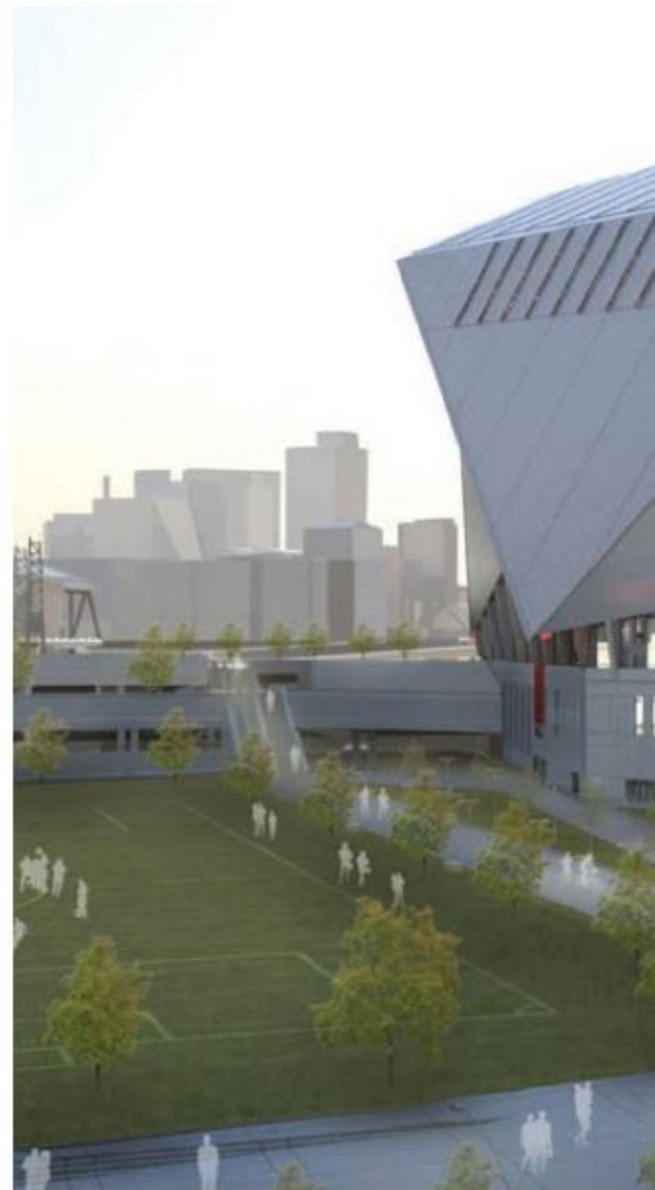
Another entertaining part of the evening came courtesy of a soccer support group called "Terminus Legion," loyal fans of Atlanta's MLS franchise. They yelled and clapped loudly for anything and everything seen or mentioned referring to MLS Atlanta. MLS Commissioner Don Garber recognized Terminus Legion during his speech and joked that he paid them to come and make noise. Blank was clearly the group's favorite; they chanted "Uncle Arthur" as he took the stage.

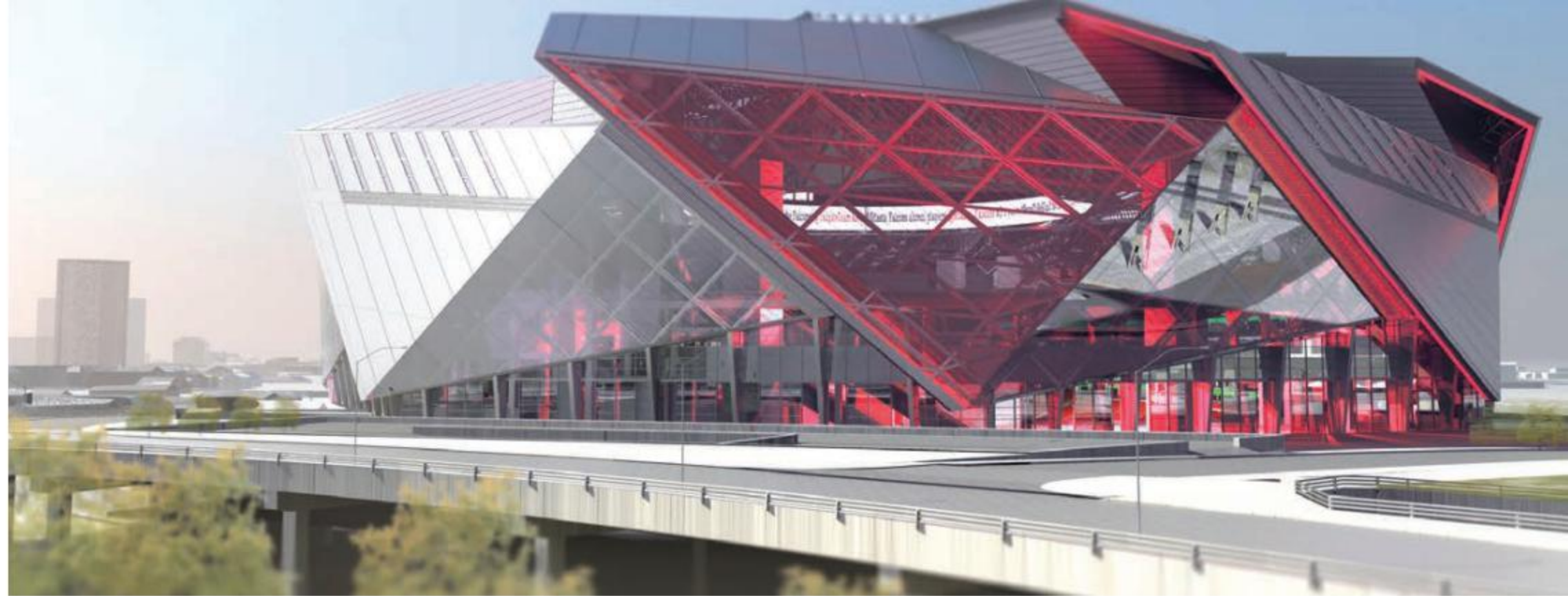
"He is Atlanta's uncle," said one of the Terminus Legion members of Blank. "We were really touched when, at the (MLS) announcement, he turned during his speech and said 'We're here for the fans,' and that was not lost on us. We saw that and we want to thank him and let him know that we consider him family as well."///





NEW FALCONS STADIUM OPENS IN 2017







Arthur Blank

Owner & Chairman

Since being hired as the General Manager of the Atlanta Falcons, Dimitroff has re-worked the roster and has made Atlanta one of the most competitive teams in the NFL. His first move as GM was to hire not only a head coach, but a co-team builder and partner. He decided to hire Mike Smith and the duo have built a solid team that has won 60 games over the last six seasons. The 60 wins are the sixth most in the NFL since 2008, and are the most over a six-year span in Falcons history. Atlanta posted five consecutive winning seasons between 2008 and 2012 and earned three consecutive playoff berths for the first time in franchise history from 2010 to 2012.

Dimitroff has been named Executive of the Year by Sporting News two times (2008 & 2010) during his six seasons in Atlanta. In the draft, he has selected franchise cornerstones QB Matt Ryan, WR Julio Jones, T Sam Baker, T Jake Matthews, S William Moore and CB Desmond Trufant and he has added key veterans via free agency like RB Steven Jackson, DE Osi Umenyiora, G Jon Asamoah, DT Paul Soliai, WR Devin Hester and DT/DE Tyson Jackson to shore up key positions.

Since his first day on the job, Dimitroff has brought the philosophical approach of building through the draft and supplementing with free agency. With the help of his scouting department, Dimitroff has made the Atlanta Falcons the class of the NFL when it comes to keeping and growing the players a team drafts. Since 2008, the Falcons rank first in the NFL in draft retention (65.2 pct.). From 2008 through 2013, Atlanta selected 46 players in the draft and an astonishing 30 draftees remained on the roster entering the 2014 season. Also during that time, 38 of the Falcons 46 selections are active players in the NFL (82.6 pct.), which is the fourth best mark in the League since 2008.

The 2013 season proved to be the most challenging for Dimitroff and the Falcons. The team faced a number of injuries to key players and finished the year with a 4-12 record. The disappointing season led to in-depth self-analysis by Dimitroff and Smith. There were changes to the coaching staff, but Dimitroff was focused on adjustments to his personnel department and the roster. He added two former general man-

agers to his staff, Billy Devaney and Scott Pioli. Shortly after adding experienced talent evaluators to his staff, Dimitroff's focus turned to improving the roster.

He was very open about his evaluation of the offensive and defensive lines performance in 2013 and he knew there needed to be upgrades to both sides.

"I believe where things went awry offensively line-wise, was more the missed assessment on the readiness on this offensive line to play together as a unit," stated Dimitroff at the season ending press conference. "I think individually we have some players that are developing along the offensive line that we think have upside. Some were challenged more than others this year. Some played at times well, other times struggled. We're going to do all in our power to make sure we correct that at many levels."

Dimitroff was true to his word as he and Coach Smith re-worked the Falcons roster this offseason. On the first day of free agency the Falcons added G Jon Asamoah, NT Paul Soliai and DT/DE Tyson Jackson. The three men joined the previously signed OL Gabe Carimi to add grittiness and stoutness to both the offensive and defensive lines. Atlanta also re-signed five players that play along either the offensive or defensive lines. Dimitroff orchestrated 13 moves in free agency and nine of them were long the lines. Atlanta also signed the most prolific returner in NFL history when they added WR Devin Hester, and added safety Dwight Lowery and CB Josh Wilson.

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Bowl and also played key roles in the Falcons securing their first playoff victory in the Dimitroff and Smith regime.

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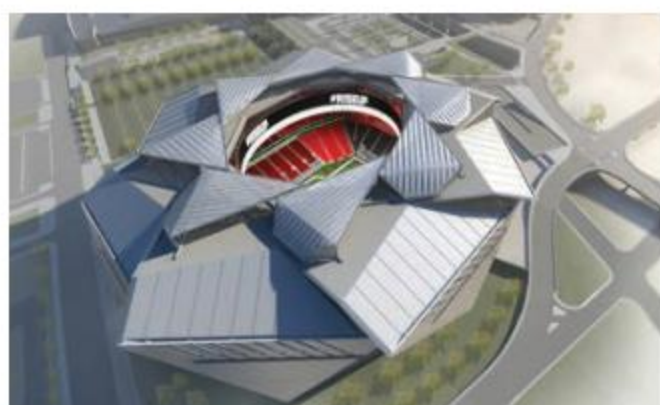


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In addition to Falcons regular and post-season home games, the New Stadium will host Major League Soccer's Atlanta franchise set to kick-off in March 2017, as well as continue to host Georgia Dome legacy events, such as the SEC Championship Game, Chick-fil-A Kickoff, Chick-fil-A Bowl Game(s) and the Bank of America Atlanta Football Classic.



Nearly 64,000 square feet of LED, the New Stadium video halo will be the largest in the world.

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Warrick Dunn

Former NFL running back with Atlanta Falcons and Tampa Bay Buccaneers who rushed for over 11,000 career yards. Founder of Warrick Dunn Charities. 2004 Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year, 2013 Louisiana Champion of Service Award, and recipient of 2011 Jefferson Award for outstanding public service. Earned his EMBA from Emory University in 2013.



Derek V. Smith

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Douglas J. Hertz

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John A. Williams

Chairman, CEO, and Director of Preferred Apartment Communities, Inc. Founder of Post Properties, Inc. Member of Board of Directors of Rentech, Inc., a nitrogen fertilizer and wood fiber processing company.



John P. Imlay, Jr

Chairman, Imlay Investments, Inc., a private investment firm; Chairman, The Imlay Foundation; member of Atlanta Rotary. Minority owner of the Falcons since 1991.



Brian J. Barker

Founder and CEO of AFS, an industry-leader for 30 years in Transportation Cost Management headquartered in Shreveport, La. Resides in Park City, Utah and is an active community supporter in Shreveport, Park City and Destin, FL, including school age athletics & sports complex, inner-city sports camps, shelter for abused women & children and Trustee of DCWA that provides financial support for at risk kids.



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Judge on nationally syndicated television series Judge Hatchett. Nationally-recognized authority on juvenile and social issues. Author of national best-selling books Dare to Take Charge and Say What You Mean and Mean What You Say. Former Chief Presiding Judge of Fulton County, Georgia Juvenile Court.



Steve Bartkowski

In business development at DPR Construction, Inc., a global commercial contractor and construction management company. Well-known in the Atlanta community for record-breaking performance as starting quarterback with Atlanta Falcons between 1975 and 1985. Member of College Football Hall of Fame, Atlanta Sports Hall of Fame and Georgia Sports Hall of Fame. Involved with many charitable fundraisers throughout the year.



Ingrid Saunders Jones

Retired senior vice president - Global Community Connections, The Coca-Cola Company, and Chair, Coca-Cola Foundation. Chair of National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), an organization focused on health, financial well-being and education of children and families. Member of Clark Atlanta University board of trustees; Carter Center board of councilors; Woodruff Arts Center; Rotary Club of Atlanta; Society of International Business Fellows; and Girl Scouts USA national board of directors.



Bill Bolling

Founder and executive director, Atlanta Community Food Bank, a provider of food and other donated grocery items to non-profit partner agencies in Metro Atlanta and North Georgia. Charter member of Feeding America board of directors, and board member of Georgia Chamber of Commerce and Regional Commission on Homelessness. Member of nonprofit studies program advisory committee of Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University.



Felker W. Ward, Jr.

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Dr. Robert Franklin

Director of Religion department at Chautauqua Institution and James Laney Professor of Moral Leadership at Emory University. In 2013, Visiting Scholar in Residence at Stanford University's Martin Luther King, Jr. Research & Education Institute. President Emeritus of Morehouse College. Serves on the boards of Salvation Army, CNN Dialogues Advisory Committee, and NASA's 100-year Starship Project Advisory Board. Member of Council on Foreign Relations.



Ambassador Andrew Young

Former co-chair of Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games. Mayor of Atlanta from 1982 to 1990. Board member of The United Nations Foundation, Member of 100 Black Men of Atlanta and Founder and Chairman of the Andrew J. Young Foundation. The Foundation embodies his philosophy of creative nonviolence, exemplary of his work as pastor, civil rights leader, diplomat, politician and humanitarian.



Rich McKay

President & CEO

Falcons President & CEO Rich McKay is entering his 11th season with the Atlanta Falcons. After serving the first eight years as President of the Falcons, McKay was promoted to President & CEO of the club by Owner & Chairman Arthur M. Blank on September 1, 2011. McKay was named President of the newly-formed AMB Sports & Entertainment Group on Jan. 27, 2014. The new entity will include the Falcons and the new stadium, which the Falcons will operate.

McKay's long-term involvement in the NFL includes many notable achievements. He has played pivotal roles in two successful stadium negotiations (Atlanta and Tampa Bay), he was the General Manager and chief football architect for a Super Bowl championship team in Tampa Bay (XXXVII), he has served as an active participant within the NFL's committee system to help advance the game and the NFL's business and was substantially involved in the latest Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiations which led to the current multi-year agreement. According to the Pro Football Hall of Fame, McKay is the first NFL GM in League history to have both of his first two drafts become first ballot Hall of Famers.

Additionally, McKay has been a member of the NFL's Competition Committee for the past 21 years. He became Co-Chairman of the committee in 1998 and on March 1, 2011, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell named McKay Chairman of the committee which is comprised of NFL head coaches and League executives who study the game and recommend rules changes and modifications to ensure player safety while promoting competitiveness among all 32 of the League's franchises.

For the past nine years, McKay has also served on the NFL Management Council Working Group of League executives that helps advise on collective bargaining issues. During the 2011 off-season, McKay played a pivotal role in helping to negotiate a new Collective Bargaining Agreement with the players that resulted in a 10-year agreement through 2020.

"Of all of the club executives, Rich had the most sustained and substantial involvement," said NFL Executive Vice President/

League Counsel Jeff Pash. "We had a lot of club people who were involved in many phases of our planning, but Rich had the most direct ongoing involvement in the negotiations."

McKay's career as one of the top senior level executives in all of professional sports began in Tampa Bay in 1986 when he served as General Counsel for the Buccaneers before rising to General Manager in 1994.

McKay served as Tampa Bay's point man and lead negotiator in the construction of Raymond James Stadium - Tampa Bay's state-of-the-art, open-air stadium which hosted Super Bowl XXXV in 2001 and Super Bowl XLII in 2009.

Sixteen years after building Raymond James Stadium in Tampa Bay, McKay, working closely with Falcons Chairman & Owner Arthur M. Blank, the city of Atlanta, and the Georgia World Congress Center stadium authority, secured approval and financing for the Falcons new stadium project after nearly two years of intense back and forth negotiations.

The club broke ground on the new stadium May 19, 2014 with NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, Major League Soccer Commissioner Don Garber, and Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed all in attendance for the historic announcement which will keep the Falcons franchise playing their games in downtown Atlanta.

McKay is believed to be the only current NFL executive who has been the point person for the negotiations of two successful NFL stadium deals.

"The interesting aspect about both of those projects is how dramatically different they both are from a negotiation and planning perspective," McKay said. "The fortunate thing in both instances is that we've worked and are working with people who want what's best for the city, the state, and the franchise. When you have that kind of partnership, you are usually able to resolve various differences and come up with workable solutions that benefit all parties."

McKay's 23 seasons as an NFL executive have also been marked by several other significant highlights:

- During 13 seasons as an NFL General Manager, McKay was the football ar-

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chitect who built six teams that reached the NFC playoffs, three that reached the NFC Championship Game and one team that won a Super Bowl title. His overall record as an NFL General Manager was 112-96 with a winning playoff record of 6-5.

- McKay also worked with three different NFL head coaches who guided their respective teams to the NFC Championship Game (Tony Dungy 1999 with Tampa Bay; Jon Gruden 2002 with Tampa Bay; and Jim Mora 2004 with Atlanta).
- McKay's personnel scouting acumen was a successful formula which produced 59 players that played in the Pro Bowl during his time as an NFL General Manager. Tampa Bay's 41 Pro Bowl selections between 1997 through 2002 were the most in the NFL. To put it into perspective, the Buccaneers only had 19 Pro Bowl selections in the first 21 years of their history leading up to 1997.
- McKay's first pick ever as an NFL GM in 1995 was DT Warren Sapp, now an in-studio analyst for NFL Network and his second pick (also in 1995) was LB Derrick Brooks, an 11-time Pro Bowler for the Buccaneers who serves as a guest analyst for ESPN's First Take and Sirius Satellite radio. Sapp and Brooks combined to make 18 Pro Bowl appearances during their tenures with the Buccaneers. Both players were named to the NFL's Top 75 Draft Picks of all time by NFL Network in 2011. Sapp was voted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2013 during his first year of eligibility. Brooks will be enshrined in Canton, Ohio on August 2.
- As a GM, 11 of McKay's top former lieutenants have risen through the ranks to sit in the General Manager's chair at other NFL franchises. The men currently occupying those roles in the NFL include Ruston Webster (Tennessee Titans), Dennis Hickey (Miami Dolphins), Ray Farmer (Cleveland Browns), Les Snead (St. Louis Rams), Phil Emery (Chicago Bears) and John Idzik (New York Jets).
- While many of the players McKay drafted developed into NFL stars on the field, several have been Pro Bowl performers from a charitable standpoint, as well. Atlanta Falcons Limited Partner Warrick Dunn, whom McKay drafted in 1997, was the recipient of the 2004 Walter Payton/NFL Man of the Year award. This award is presented annually to the NFL's most philanthropic player. Derrick Brooks was also a co-recipient of the award in 2000.
- Arguably one of the brightest moments of McKay's distinguished NFL career took place in sunny San Diego, California on January 26, 2003 when he completed the overhaul of the Buccaneers – long consid-

ered one of the worst franchises in professional sports. Tampa Bay's 48-21 victory over the Oakland Raiders in Super Bowl XXXVII vaulted the Buccaneers from the basement of professional sports to the top of the NFL universe.

- McKay was the 2005 recipient of the Jack Horrigan Award. This award is presented annually by the Pro Football Writers of America to the club or League office executive who is the most helpful and cooperative with the local and national news media that report on the NFL.

The McKay family is arguably one of the most successful football families with substantial roots in both the collegiate and professional game. Rich's late father, the legendary John McKay, led the University of Southern California Trojans to four National Championships in 16 seasons. Rich's older brother J.K. McKay, who is an executive in the USC athletic department, was a starting wide receiver for the Trojans and was part of two national championship teams (1972 & 1974) and played in three Rose Bowl games while playing for his father John McKay. Between the three McKay's, they have won six National Championships, participated as a player or coach in 12 Rose Bowls, participated as a coach, player or team executive in six NFL Conference Championship Games, won two National Collegiate Coach of the Year Awards, won one XFL Championship as a General Manager, won one Super Bowl Championship as a General Manager and had

three draft picks selected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame (Lee Roy Selmon – the first pick for John McKay as a NFL Head Coach for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 1976 and Warren Sapp – the first pick for Rich McKay as an NFL General Manager in 1995 and Derrick Brooks).

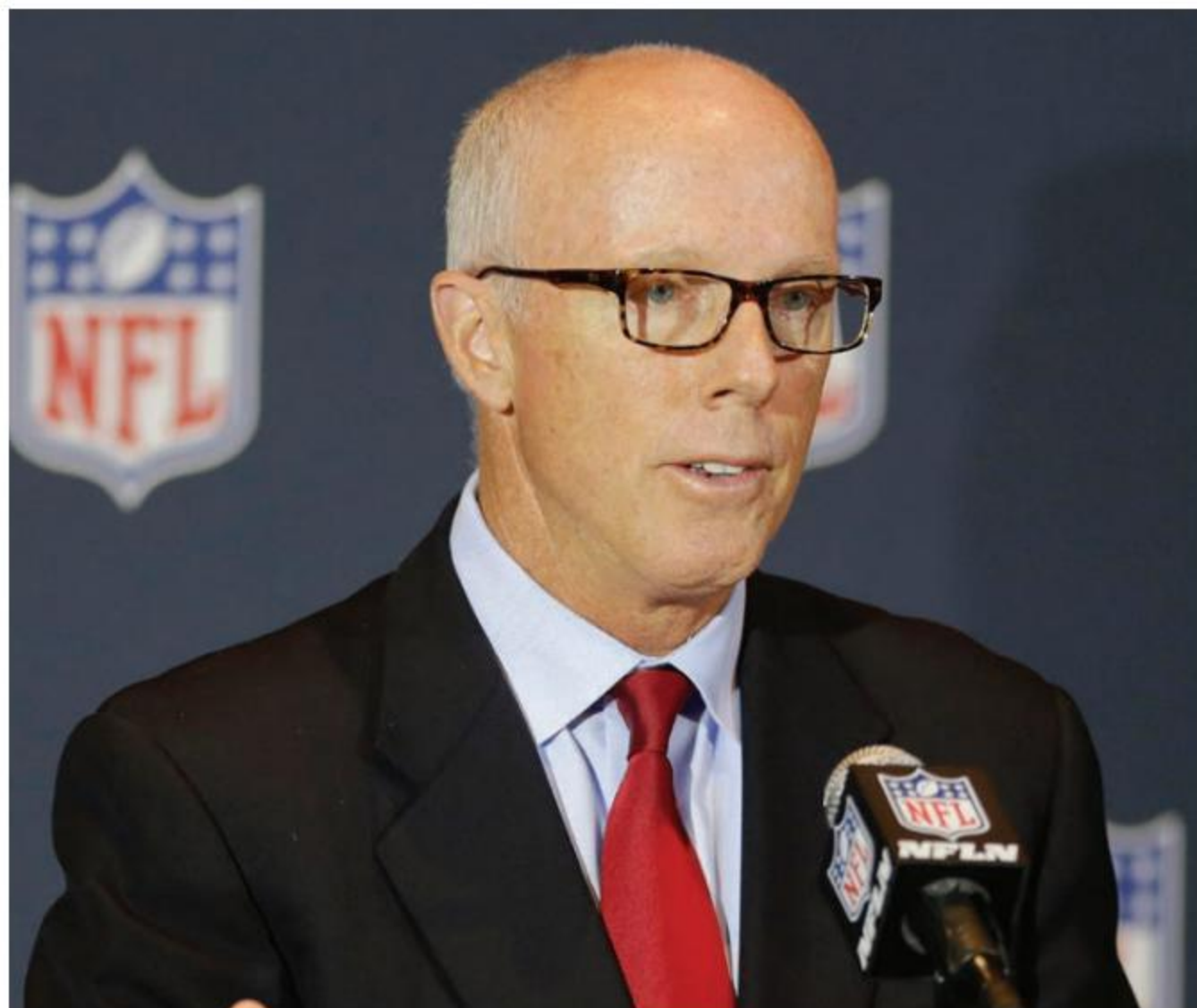
Coach McKay's legacy was honored in 2012 with the opening of the \$70 million, 110,000 square-foot new Athletic Center at USC named The John McKay Center. The center opened during the summer of 2012 and serves as the home of all USC athletics. Coach McKay had also previously been inducted into the Tampa Bay Buccaneers Ring of Honor as its second member in 2010.

Rich earned his Bachelor's degree in Economics in 1981 from Princeton University. He graduated from Stetson's College of Law in 1984 and clerked for two years for Tampa's U.S. District Judge William Terrell Hodges. McKay worked at the Tampa law firm of Hill, Ward, and Henderson, P.A., from 1986-1992 where he served as General Counsel for the Buccaneers.

Born March 16, 1959 in Eugene, Oregon, McKay grew up in Los Angeles and Tampa, graduating from Tampa's Jesuit High School.

As an avid long distance runner, Rich has participated in and finished four New York City, Atlanta, and the Los Angeles Marathons.

McKay and his wife, Terrin, have two sons; Hunter, a 2012 graduate of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama who is now employed in the Sports Information Office at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Ga. and John, a senior at USC in Los Angeles. ///





Thomas Dimitroff

General Manager

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Since being hired as the General Manager of the Atlanta Falcons, Thomas Dimitroff has re-worked the roster and has made Atlanta one of the most competitive teams in the NFL. His first move as GM was to hire not only a head coach, but a co-team builder and partner. He decided to hire Mike Smith and the duo has built a solid team that has won 60 games over the last six seasons. The 60 wins are the sixth-most in the NFL since 2008, and are the most over a six-year span in Falcons history. Atlanta posted five consecutive winning seasons between 2008 and 2012 and earned three consecutive playoff berths for the first time in franchise history from 2010 to 2012.

Dimitroff has been named Executive of the Year by Sporting News two times (2008 & 2010) during his six seasons in Atlanta. In the draft, he has selected franchise cornerstones QB Matt Ryan, WR Julio Jones, T Sam Baker, T Jake Matthews, S William Moore and CB Desmond Trufant and he has added key veterans via free agency like RB Steven Jackson, DE Osi Umenyiora, G Jon Asamoah, DT Paul Soliai, WR Devin Hester and DT/DE Tyson Jackson to shore up key positions.

Since his first day on the job, Dimitroff has brought the philosophical approach of building through the draft and supplementing with free agency. With the help of his scouting department, Dimitroff has made the Atlanta Falcons the class of the NFL when it comes to keeping and growing the players a team drafts. Since 2008, the Falcons rank first in the NFL in draft retention (65.2 pct.). From 2008 through 2013, Atlanta selected 46 players in the draft and an astonishing 30 draftees remained on the roster entering the 2014 season. Also during that time, 38 of the Falcons 46 selections are active players in the NFL (82.6 pct.), which is the fourth-best mark in the League since 2008.

The 2013 season proved to be the most challenging for Dimitroff and the Falcons. The team faced a number of injuries to key players and finished the year with a 4-12 record. The disappointing season led to in-depth self-analysis by Dimitroff and Smith. There were changes to the coaching staff, but Dimitroff was focused on adjustments to his personnel department and the roster. He added two former general man-

agers to his staff, Billy Devaney and Scott Pioli. Shortly after adding experienced talent evaluators to his staff, Dimitroff's focus turned to improving the roster.

He was very open about his evaluation of the offensive and defensive lines' performances in 2013 and he knew there needed to be upgrades to both sides.

"I believe where things went awry offensively line-wise, was more the missed assessment on the readiness on this offensive line to play together as a unit," stated Dimitroff at the season ending press conference. "I think individually we have some players that are developing along the offensive line that we think have upside. Some were challenged more than others this year. Some played at times well, other times struggled. We're going to do all in our power to make sure we correct that at many levels."

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With the roster in place, Dimitroff's attention has been on how this team and organization will rebound from the 2013 campaign. He has no doubt that the right people



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Despite suffering a first-round playoff loss to the New York Giants in 2011, Atlanta's 2011 regular season was filled with memorable moments and significant accomplishments. Ryan produced a solid season by setting at that time the franchise-record for passing yards (4,177) in addition to throwing 29 touchdowns and finishing the season with a 92.2 passer rating. Ryan's record-setting performance was joined by RB Michael Turner and WR Roddy White who entered the pages of Falcons history. Turner broke RB Gerald Riggs' franchise record of 48 rushing touchdowns, with two scores against Tampa Bay in Week 17, giving him 50 as a Falcon. "The Burner" also led the NFC in rushing yards with 1,340 yards and added 11 touchdowns on the season.

In each season since ascending to the General Manager's position in Atlanta, Dimitroff has astutely engineered key moves and deftly drafted a solid nucleus of players to bolster the Falcons roster. ///





Scott Pioli

Assistant General Manager

**HE HAS BEEN NAMED
NFL EXECUTIVE
OF THE YEAR
BY VARIOUS NATIONAL
MEDIA OUTLETS
FIVE TIMES
DURING HIS CAREER,
INCLUDING HONORS
FROM SPORTS
ILLUSTRATED, CBS
SPORTS, AND PRO
FOOTBALL WEEKLY/
PFWA IN 2010.**

Scott Pioli brings 22 years of NFL experience to the Falcons personnel department, including four seasons as the general manager of the Kansas City Chiefs. He has been named NFL Executive of the Year by various national media outlets five times during his career, including honors from Sporting News, Sports Illustrated, CBS Sports, and Pro Football Weekly/PFWA in 2010. Pioli also serves as a member of the NFL's Bill Walsh Minority Fellowship Advisory Council, helping to make the NFL a more diverse and inclusive league.

In his second season in Kansas City, Pioli orchestrated one of the greatest turnarounds in Chiefs history as the club won the AFC West with a 10-6 record. It was Kansas City's first division title and home playoff appearance since 2003. In four seasons with the Chiefs, Pioli drafted Pro Bowl players such as Eric Berry (3), Justin Houston (2), Dontari Poe, and Dexter McCcluster. In addition to the Pro Bowlers he selected in the NFL Draft, four players Pioli signed to contract extensions went on to earn Pro Bowl honors. Matt Cassel (2010), Jamaal Charles (2010), Tamba Hali (2011), and Derrick Johnson (2011) all earned their first career Pro Bowl selections after Pioli signed them to extensions.

Pioli joined the Chiefs after serving as the Vice President of Player Personnel with the New England Patriots where he spent six seasons working with Falcons General Manager Thomas Dimitroff (2002-07). During his nine-year tenure in New England (2000-08), the Patriots compiled an NFL-best 102-42 (.708) regular season record, won Super Bowls XXXVI, XXXVIII and XXXIX, claimed four AFC championships, and won six AFC East titles.

With New England, the Patriots became widely recognized as one of the NFL's model franchises. Working in close concert with Head Coach Bill Belichick, the duo rapidly developed the Patriots into a consistent championship contender. Pioli and Belichick's collaborative efforts over nine seasons in New England resulted in 14 playoff victories, tying the Pittsburgh and Dallas squads of the 1970s for the most playoff wins by a franchise in a single decade. New England accumulated 11 playoff victories from 2003-07, the highest total by any team

over a five-year span in NFL history.

Pioli was named the George Young NFL Executive of the Year by The Sporting News following the 2003 and 2004 seasons, an award voted on by other NFL executives. The youngest individual ever to win that accolade, Pioli joined Bobby Beathard (Washington '82-83) and Bill Polian (Carolina '95-96) as just the third person to ever win that honor in consecutive seasons.

Pioli and Belichick became the first personnel director/head coach tandem in league annals to win three Super Bowls during a four-year span (2001-04). They also helped the Patriots register nine or more victories in eight consecutive seasons, including the NFL's first 16-0 regular season in 2007.

Pioli began his NFL career when he was hired by Belichick as a Scouting Assistant for the Cleveland Browns in 1992. He spent the next three seasons working as the Browns Pro Personnel Assistant where he was responsible for the evaluation of both college prospects and veteran free agents, as well as negotiating various player contracts. He was promoted to Pro Personnel Coordinator when the team moved to Baltimore in 1996.

In 1997, Pioli was hired as the New York Jets Director of Pro Personnel. In just two seasons working with Head Coach Bill Parcells, the Jets completed a worst-to-first turnaround, rebounding from a 1-15 campaign in 1996 to a 12-4 record in 1998. Those 12 wins in 1998 were the most in franchise history and gave the Jets their first division title since 1968.

Pioli played defensive tackle at Central Connecticut State (1983-87), where he was a three-time Division II All-New England selection and graduated with a degree in Communications. From 1988-89, he served as a Graduate Assistant at Syracuse University, where he also earned a master's degree from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications.

Pioli then took a full-time coaching opportunity at Murray State, where he spent one season as the offensive line coach (1990) and one season as the defensive line coach (1991). He left the coaching ranks to join the Browns personnel department in 1992. ///



Executive Team Management



Greg Beadles | Executive Vice President, Chief Administrative & Financial Officer

The LSU graduate oversees all financial operations of the Falcons, as well as logistics, facilities management, and team travel. Greg also oversees technology planning and management for the Blank Family of Businesses. In addition, he is deeply involved in all aspects of the new Atlanta stadium planning and construction. Greg was named "CFO of the Year" in 2012 by the Atlanta Business Chronicle.



Danny Branch | Chief Information Officer

Danny is in his 11th season with the Falcons after serving at Home Depot as Vice President of Information Services. The Georgia graduate has more than 30 years of experience in systems development, deployment and support. Branch is responsible for all business IT-related activities for the Falcons and the Blank Family of Businesses.



David Homrich | Executive Vice President, Finance & Investments, AMB Group; President, Exodus Capital, LLC

David is responsible for financial planning, investment strategy and management, new business analysis and development, and real estate acquisition. Prior to joining AMB Group, David was co-founder and CEO of Homrich Berg, a wealth management firm.



Kendyl Moss | Vice President of Community Relations

Kendyl is in her 13th season with the Falcons, with responsibility for community initiatives, player outreach and youth football programming. She is a University of Texas graduate, and also holds a master's degree from DePaul University. Prior to her role with the Falcons, Kendyl was the assistant director of the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship and Final Four.



Reggie Roberts | Vice President of Football Communications

Reggie is in his 23rd season in the National Football League and his 11th with the Falcons, where he manages all media and football communications matters. The University of Louisiana-Monroe graduate is the team's liaison with local, national and international media and the club contact for television and radio networks that broadcast Falcons games.



Kim Shreckengost | Executive Vice President, Chief Administrative Officer

Kim is responsible for all public relations and communications at the Falcons and across the Blank Family of Businesses. In addition, she oversees human resources across the businesses and the operations of Mountain Sky Guest Ranch in Montana. A graduate of Wayne State University in Detroit, Kim is a member of the new stadium design committee.



Jim Smith | Executive Vice President, Chief Marketing & Revenue Officer

The Northwestern graduate started with the Falcons in 2003 after a successful stint as president/general manager of Major League Soccer's Columbus Crew. Jim and his team are responsible for the Falcons' and new stadium's marketing, ticket sales and service, sponsorship sales and service, and retail operations.



Tim Zulawski | Vice President of Sponsorship Sales & Service

A native of Buffalo, Tim leads the Falcons' and new stadium's development and relationship management of corporate partnerships. Prior to joining the Falcons, Tim negotiated sponsorships for the Tampa Bay Lightning, Tampa Bay Storm and the St. Pete Times Forum.



Scott Jenkins | New Stadium General Manager - AMB Sports & Entertainment Group

Scott joined us in 2014 after spending the past seven years as the vice president of ballpark operations for the Seattle Mariners' Safeco Field. He is currently working with a team in the planning and construction of the new Atlanta stadium and will manage its operations. Scott is an inaugural member and chairman of the Green Sports Alliance.



Roddy White | Vice President of Events

A UGA graduate, Roddy was the Falcons' director of event marketing for 12 seasons before being promoted to his current role this year. He was the Jaguars' director of special events and promotions before coming to Atlanta.



Rob Geoffrey | Vice President of Finance

Rob was promoted to VP this year after being the Falcons' controller for eight seasons. Rob's background includes sports business management, accounting, finance, risk management and operations.



Don Rovak | Vice President of Sales and Service

Don spent six seasons as the team's director of ticket sales and service before being promoted to VP of sales in 2013. He built the Falcons' ticket sales department, which has led the NFL in new season tickets sales in four seasons.



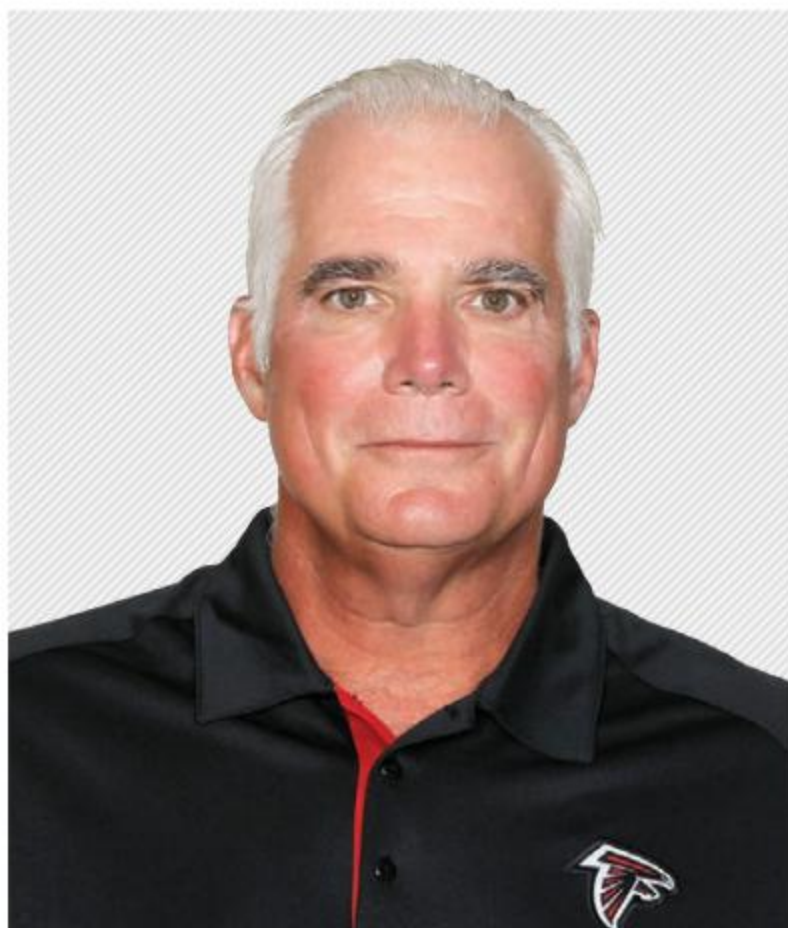
Lisa Chang | Senior Vice President of Human Resources

Lisa joined us in 2014 and leads human resources strategy and policy across the businesses. She also oversees the corporate security and aviation departments. Prior to joining AMB Group, Lisa was vice president of human resources - international at Equifax.



Jared Miller | Chief Technology Officer | AMB Sports & Entertainment Group

Joining us in 2014, Jared leads technology planning for the new Atlanta stadium, working with a cross-functional team to integrate technology solutions into the new stadium development. He will oversee core stadium technology functions when the new stadium opens. Prior to joining AMB Sports & Entertainment, Jared served as vice president of solution management for travel at NCR Corporation.



Mike Smith

Head Coach

Since becoming Atlanta's head coach in 2008, Mike Smith has established his team as one of the NFL's most consistent performing franchises that seemingly always finds itself in the national, playoff discussion.

During Smith's impressive six-year run, the Falcons have compiled a 60-36 regular season record, which is the sixth-best mark in the NFL during that time, and have captured two NFC South Division titles. Atlanta's .625 winning percentage is the highest in team history over a six-year period.

Smith's accomplishments in his first five seasons (2008-12) as Atlanta's head coach are unprecedented in team history and are among the best in the NFL when measured against his coaching counterparts. He reached the 50-win milestone in 71 games. According to the Elias Sports Bureau, he was the third-fastest head coach to accomplish the feat since the 1970 AFL-NFL merger. Only George Seifert (62 games) and Chuck Knox (65 games) reached 50 wins faster than Smith during that time.

Smith's 56 wins in his first five seasons as a head coach were the second-most among any first-time head coach in NFL history (George Seifert, 62-18).

He also became the first coach in franchise history to produce back-to-back winning seasons (2008-09), and in 2012, Smith became the first coach in team history to lead his team to three consecutive playoff appearances (2010-12).

The 2013 campaign presented a number of challenges for Smith and his football team. The team faced a number of injuries, while compiling a 4-7 record in one-score games, and finished the season 4-12. Atlanta finished the season 2-4, with all six games being decided by one-score, including five games by four-points-or-less. The team's fight and willingness to finish the season the right way was a testament to the leadership of Smith.

The affable Smith - known as "Smitty" to his players and coaching staff - led the Falcons to an NFC-best 13-3 mark in 2012, securing the team's third straight playoff berth. The Falcons also hosted the NFC Championship Game in the Georgia Dome for the first time in the franchise's 47-year history.

Additionally, the Falcons became the first NFC team to earn the conference's top seed twice in three seasons (2010 & 2012) since the Philadelphia Eagles posted

the NFC's best record in three straight seasons from 2002-04. For his efforts, Smith was named the Sporting News Coach of the Year for the third time in five seasons (2008, 2010 & 2012).

Smith's steady hand at the helm includes a strong emphasis on establishing a true home field advantage and that philosophy has produced an astounding 36-12 home record and .750 winning percentage during his tenure, the fifth-best mark in the NFL over the last six seasons.

One of Smith's basic coaching philosophies centers on his team displaying sustainability. He wants his Falcons to be able to maintain a certain level of performance, not just each season, but from game to game, quarter to quarter, and play to play.

Smith's overall coaching philosophy is one based on starting fast in all three phases of the game. Perhaps that explains why his Falcons have amassed a 45-16 record in games where they score first. Coupled with core principles built around playing fundamentally sound football, Smith's disciplined teams have displayed a knack for holding onto leads and closing out the opposition.

Smith's troops have posted a 46-5 record in games where the Falcons lead at halftime (since 2008). Atlanta also owns a 45-2 mark in contests where the Birds hold the lead at the beginning of the fourth quarter since 2008.

Smith, one of the top defensive minded coaches in all of pro football, teaches a rugged and physical approach to defense which has produced the third-stingiest group in the NFC in points allowed since 2008 at 20.1.

Additionally, the Falcons were among the best in the NFL in 2012 in scoring offense and scoring defense - finishing seventh and sixth in the NFL in both categories, respectively. Atlanta averaged 26.1 points per game on offense; the Falcons defense surrendered 18.7 points per game in 2012.

From a team perspective, the Falcons lit up the NFL during the 2012 season. QB Matt Ryan earned his second trip to the Pro Bowl after setting franchise records for passing yards (4,719), attempts (615), completions (422), consecutive passes without an INT (272), completion percentage (NFL-best 68.6), touchdown passes (32), and 300-yard passing games (7).

TE Tony Gonzalez earned his 13th career Pro Bowl selection after becoming the

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first tight end and eighth player in NFL history to record 100 career touchdown receptions.

WR Roddy White recorded his franchise record sixth consecutive 1,000-yard season in 2012 while teammate Julio Jones – who earned his first trip to the NFC Pro Bowl game – set a franchise record with 182 receiving yards in the NFC Championship Game.

In 2011, the Falcons defense ranked second in the NFL in red zone efficiency (78.7 pct.) and finished sixth in the NFL in rushing defense (97.0 ypg).

The Falcons' special teams units have also excelled through Smith's emphasis and direction by finishing in the top 10 in NFL rankings in each of the past five seasons.

Under the guidance of Smith, the Falcons posted a 10-6 record and earned their second consecutive playoff berth in 2011. The playoff berth marked the third time in four seasons Atlanta has reached the playoffs under Smith.

The Birds wrapped up the 2011 campaign in record-setting fashion, as QB Matt Ryan, RB Michael Turner and WR Roddy White all established new franchise bests. Ryan broke the franchise record for passing yards in a single-season after eclipsing QB Jeff George's mark of 4,143 yards set in 1995.

Ryan finished the 2011 season with 4,177 yards, 29 touchdowns and a 92.9 quarterback rating, all career highs at the time. Turner broke RB Gerald Riggs' franchise record of 48 rushing touchdowns, with two scores against Tampa Bay in Week 17, giving him 50 as a Falcon.

"The Burner" also led the NFC in rushing yards with 1,340 yards and added 11 touchdowns on the season.

White also got in on the action when he became the Falcons all-time leading receiver with 7,374 career receiving yards, breaking Terance Mathis' old mark of 7,349 yards. White also finished the season with 100 receptions and became the first player in team history to record multiple 100-catch seasons.

Atlanta also produced two Pro Bowlers in 2011 as White and TE Tony Gonzalez were each named to the NFC Pro Bowl team. The selection was the 12th for Gonzalez.

In 2010, Smith guided the Falcons to the second-most wins in a season in team history, the top record in the NFC with a 13-3 mark and an NFC South Division crown. The 13 victories also secured the number one seed in the Conference for only the second time in franchise history and the Division title was just the fourth ever for the team in 45 years in the League (and first since 2004).

Smith's club's eight-game winning streak during the 2010 campaign was the second longest ever in team annals. The Falcons also were the only team in the League to rank in the top 5 in both scoring offense (25.9 points) and scoring defense (18.0 points allowed) and boasted an NFL-high as well as a franchise-best nine players who were named to the Pro Bowl.

For all the milestones achieved in 2010, Smith earned the prestigious Sporting News NFL

Coach of the Year and the KC 101 Club's NFC Coach of the Year award for a remarkable second time in three seasons.

In 2009, Smith's club captured their final three games of the season, including two victories on the road to secure a winning record and the first back-to-back winning seasons in team history.

His club's hard-fought three-game winning streak at the end of the 2009 campaign to secure a winning season was especially impressive considering the Falcons faced the fourth-toughest schedule in the NFL and five of the team's seven losses came against playoff teams. Smith's Falcons also lost nine key starters for at least one game because of injury (and a total of 45 games of missed action overall) but still continued to display the kind of resolve that is characteristic of Smith-coached teams since he took over in Atlanta.

Under Smith's determined leadership in 2008, the Falcons enjoyed one of the biggest turnarounds that the NFL has ever witnessed. The seven-win swing going from 4-12 to 11-5 is tied for the fourth-best mark (at +7 wins) in the League for a rookie head coach since 1978.

Smith's 11 victories are tied for the top mark with five other head coaches for the best record for a rookie head coach taking over a team that finished below .500 the previous season. And only three rookie head coaches in NFL history had more wins in their first campaign on the sidelines than Smith.

Smith's firm guidance in 2008 allowed the Falcons to make several improvements from the previous season, which included points per game average, rushing yards per game average, passing touchdowns to interception ratio and fewest sacks allowed. He had his team ready to play in every game in 2008 as the Falcons were tops in the League in first quarter points scored and registered a streak of holding opponents in 12 of 15 games to under 20 yards rushing in the opening quarter of games.

The shrewd drafting of quarterback Matt Ryan and astute free agent signing of running back Michael Turner were two aggressive moves that paid immediate dividends and laid a solid foundation.

For his coaching efforts in 2008, Smith earned Associated Press and Sporting News 2008 NFL Coach of the Year honors, as well as NFC Coach of the Year by the respected KC 101 Club.

Smith boasts a strong coaching background that includes 16 NFL seasons and 33 total years in football. His defensive track record has witnessed a remarkable amount of success as he helped guide the Baltimore Ravens to a Super Bowl XXXV Championship in 2000 as a defensive assistant coach and led the Jacksonville Jaguars defense to top 10 rankings in several categories (overall defense, points allowed and rushing defense) during his time as the club's defensive coordinator (2003-2007).

With Smith's help, the Jaguars had the sixth-most wins in the NFL (from 2004-07) with 40 victories. From 2003-2007, Smith led Jacksonville's defensive unit, which ranked fourth in overall defense (296.6), third in offensive points

allowed (16.1) and fifth in rushing defense (99.3) from 2003-2006.

In his last season in Jacksonville in 2007, the Jaguars rushing defense continued that trend as the unit ranked sixth in the AFC, holding opponents to 100.3 yards per game. The Jaguars defense under Smith's direction also finished 12th in the NFL in total defense in '07.

In 2006, Jacksonville ranked second in the League in total defense (283.6), which was the highest mark for the franchise in its history. The Jaguars defense also contributed to a team-record 20 interceptions and allowed an NFL-low 11 points per game on their home turf.

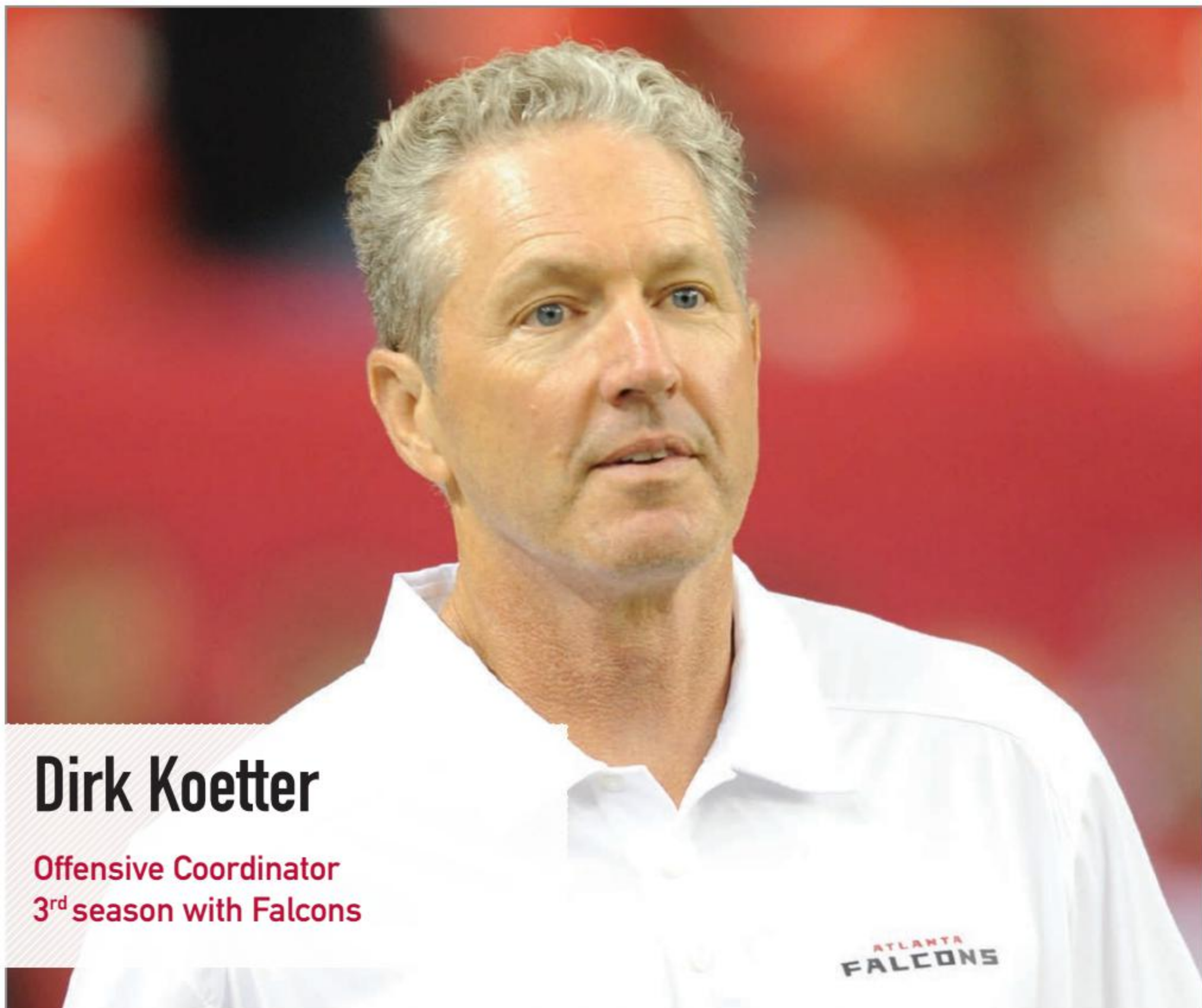
During Smith's five seasons in Jacksonville, three defensive players garnered six Pro Bowl selections, which included defensive tackle Marcus Stroud (2003-2005), defensive tackle John Henderson (2004, 2006) and cornerback Rashean Mathis (2006). Smith also coached the likes of defensive end Bobby McCray, who became just the fourth Jaguar to record at least 10 sacks in 2005. Smith contributed to three winning seasons in Jacksonville (2004-2005, 2007) as the team reached the playoffs for the sixth occasion in franchise history in 2007 and defeated the Pittsburgh Steelers in an AFC Divisional Playoff game on the road at Heinz Field.

Prior to joining the Jaguars, Smith spent four seasons with the Baltimore Ravens and was the Defensive Assistant/Defensive Line Coach from 1999-2001, which included the team's 2000 Super Bowl winning season. The Ravens defense set an NFL 16-game record by allowing only 165 points en route to the team's first NFL championship.

In 2002, Smith served as Baltimore's Linebackers Coach. That season, the Ravens featured All-Pro linebacker Ray Lewis and Pro Bowl linebacker Peter Boulware, who recorded 57 tackles, seven sacks for a loss of 51 yards, one interception and four passes defended in his finest NFL season under Smith's tutelage. Before joining the NFL ranks, Smith spent 12 seasons at Tennessee Tech from 1987-1998. He was the Golden Eagles' Defensive Coordinator for the last three seasons as the team finished in the top 10 in the nation in total defense (1997 and 1998). He joined the Tennessee Tech staff as the Defensive Line Coach and then served as the Special Team Coordinator from 1988 to 1995. Prior to his last season with the Golden Eagles, Smith was promoted to Assistant Head Coach on top of his Defensive Coordinator duties.

Smith played college football at East Tennessee (1977-1981) and was named defensive MVP twice at his position. He led the team with a school record 186 tackles as a senior. Smith was born on June 13, 1959.

Smith, his wife Julie, and their daughter, Logan, live in Suwanee, Georgia. ///



Dirk Koetter

Offensive Coordinator
3rd season with Falcons



Koetter is entering his third season as offensive coordinator of the Falcons. In his first year at the helm in 2012, Atlanta finished second in the entire NFL in total offense. The Falcons were plagued by injury problems last season, but they still registered in the top half of the NFL (14th) in total offense, including seventh in passing offense.

Prior to his arrival in Atlanta, Koetter spent five years as offensive coordinator of the Jacksonville Jaguars. Led by Maurice Jones-Drew, Jacksonville was third in the League in rushing offense in 2010. Koetter previously worked as a head coach at the college ranks for nine years, both at Boise State (1998-2000) and Arizona State (2001-2005). The Pocatello, Idaho native won two bowl games and two Big West Conference titles in three seasons with Boise State. He added two more bowl victories with the Sun Devils, who made four bowl appearances and notched 40 total wins in six years under Koetter.

Koetter played quarterback at Idaho State University from 1977 through 1980. He now has more than 30 years of coaching experience under his belt.

Koetter and wife, Kim, have four children: Kaylee, Kendra, Derek and Davis.

He won the Division 1-AA national title in 1981 with Idaho State.

He coached his high school alma mater (Highland HS) to a state championship in 1984.



Mike Nolan

Defensive Coordinator
3rd season with Falcons



Nolan is entering his third season as defensive coordinator of the Falcons. His first year, 2012, saw Atlanta tie for fifth in the entire NFL in turnovers forced (31), helping the team place sixth in the League in turnover margin. Nolan is once again required to deal with injuries to his unit as Sean Weatherspoon is out for the 2014 campaign due to a torn Achilles.

Prior to his stint with the Falcons, Nolan held the same position with six different NFL franchises (Giants, Redskins, Jets, Ravens, Broncos and, most recently, the Dolphins). He was the 49ers head coach for most of four years (2005-2008). Nolan's coaching career in the NFL began in 1987 as special teams and linebackers coach in Denver. He had previously worked on the defensive side of the ball at the college level with Stanford, Rice and Louisiana State.

As a player, the Baltimore, Md. native attended the University of Oregon and was a three-year starter at safety. He worked as a graduate assistant for the Ducks in 1981.

Nolan was the NFL's youngest defensive coordinator (35) in 1993 with the Giants.

He has three brothers, two sisters and four children (Michael, Christopher, Laura and Jennifer) with his wife, Kathy.

He and his dad, Dick, make up the second father-son combo to be head coach of the same NFL franchise (San Francisco).



Keith Armstrong

Special Teams Coordinator
7th season with Falcons



Armstrong came to Atlanta at the beginning of the Mike Smith era in 2008 and has been the Falcons special teams coordinator ever since. In 2012, Armstrong's punt unit was 10th in the NFL in net return yards, a department in which the Falcons have entrenched themselves in the top half of the NFL under the Temple University graduate's leadership. The team finished 10th in the NFL in kickoff return average last season. Armstrong will now have the added benefit of coaching Devin Hester, one of the most prolific return man in the history of the League. Hester has the most career punt returns for touchdowns (13) and is tied for the most kick returns (punt and kickoff combined) for scores with 19.

Armstrong is in his second stint with Atlanta, after having been with the Falcons from 1994-1996 as the safeties coach and then the secondary's lead man. The Levittown, Penn. native has 17 years of experience as an NFL special teams coach, the first four of which came in Chicago and the next seven of which came in Miami. Armstrong's college coaching experience includes stops at Temple, Miami (Fla.), Akron, Oklahoma State and Notre Dame.

Armstrong was a four-time letterman at Temple, where he played running back and defensive back.

He and his wife, Kathleen, have two children—Kaitlin and Kristen.

Armstrong was interviewed for head coaching jobs at Chicago and Philadelphia.



Terry Robiskie

Assistant Head Coach/Wide Receivers
7th season with Falcons

Robiskie is entering his seventh season with the Falcons. He finished his NFL playing career with the Dolphins (1980-1981) and went straight into coaching as the assistant running backs coach of the Los Angeles Raiders. Robiskie won a Super Bowl as the assistant special teams coach during the 1983-84 season.

Robiskie was hired as the Falcons wide receivers coach in 2008 as was promoted to assistant head coach in June 2013. In 2012, wide receivers Roddy White and Julio Jones combined for a league-best 2,549 receiving yards on 171 catches with 17 touchdowns. Harry Douglas posted a career-high 85 catches for 1,067 receiving yards last season.

Robiskie joined Washington in 1994 and spent seven seasons with the Redskins as the wide receivers coach (1994-98) and the passing game coordinator (1999-2000). The veteran coach landed in Cleveland in 2001 and left in 2006 for the wide receiver job with the Dolphins. The veteran coach has been an interim head coach twice in his career, including 2000 with Washington and 2004 with Cleveland.

Before the NFL, Robiskie was a star running back at LSU (1973-76) and was named the Southeastern Conference (SEC) Most Valuable Player in 1976.

Robiskie and his wife, Cynthia, have three sons: Brian, Andrew and Kyle. Brian was a second round pick in 2009 by the Cleveland Browns and Andrew is a former center for the Oakland Raiders. Kyle was a wide receiver for Western Illinois.



Gerald Brown

Running Backs
7th season with Falcons

Brown is among the longest-tenured assistant coaches, going into his seventh season with the Falcons. Before coming to Atlanta, Brown's coaching career spanned 22 years, including the previous six seasons at Indiana University.

Brown served a variety of positions at Indiana, including assistant head coach. In his final season at Indiana, he filled in as assistant head coach, special teams co-coordinator and running backs coach. With his help, the offense ranked third in Big 10 averaging 31.7 points per game. In Brown's first five seasons at Indiana, the running backs averaged 1,549 rushing yards per season.

Since joining the Falcons, Brown has helped the Atlanta backfield pace the NFL. In 2011, Brown guided Michael Turner to his second consecutive 1,300-plus yard season as he led the NFC in rushing with 1,340 yards. Turner also posted his fourth consecutive season with 10 or more touchdowns (11). Brown adapts his backs to Atlanta's passing attack and in 2012 under Brown's guidance, running back Jacquizz Rodgers earned a career high in catches (53) and receiving yards (404).

Brown calls the state of Tennessee home as the Sweetwater native spent his first 17 years of coaching in the state following his graduation from Memphis State University in 1982. For 10 seasons (1989-98), he was an assistant coach at Tennessee Tech University. Brown and his wife, Jill, have one daughter, Caitlin.





Mark Collins

Outside Linebackers
5th season with Falcons

The 2014 season is Collins' fifth with the Falcons and first as the outside linebackers coach. He spent his four previous seasons as a defensive assistant with the defensive line. In 2012, the defensive line accounted for 21 of the 32 sacks the Falcons had for the season. Defensive tackle Corey Peters (five) and defensive end Jonathan Massaquoi (four) both had a career high in sacks during the 2012 season.

Collins started his coaching career in the college ranks, coaching at his alma mater, East Tennessee State, Michigan, Elon, Georgia Southern, Georgia and Louisiana-Monroe. Collins coached the linebackers and offensive line to back-to-back Rose Bowls at Michigan (2003-04) and during his lone year at Elon (2005), Collins led the Phoenix to a No. 3 ranking for total defense in the Southern Conference.

Collins spent 2006 at Georgia Southern before two seasons as a graduate assistant at the University of Georgia (2007-08). Collins was an assistant coach, working with the safeties for the University of Louisiana-Monroe in 2009. He coached two All-Sun Belt selections in safeties Greg James and James Truxillo. The Warhawks' defense allowed an average of 236.9 passing yards a game while totaling 13 interceptions during his lone year at the Monroe, La. school.



Bryan Cox

Defensive Line
1st season with Falcons

The Falcons announced Bryan Cox as defensive line coach on Jan. 14, 2014. Cox joins the Falcons after serving as defensive front seven coach and pass rush specialist for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for two seasons (2012-13). Under Cox's leadership, Buccaneers defensive tackle Gerald McCoy was selected to the 2012 Pro Bowl. During the 2012 season, the Bucs ranked first in the NFL against the run.

Cox started his coaching career with the New York Jets as the assistant defensive line coach under head coach Eric Mangini, who was the defensive backs coach during the one year Cox played in New England (2001). With Cox's help, the Jets' defense ranked seventh in the NFL in sacks (41.0) and rushing defense (94.9 yards per game).

Following his time in New York, Cox followed Mangini to the Cleveland Browns with a promotion as defensive line coach. After his two seasons in Cleveland, Cox went back to the franchise where his playing career began: the Miami Dolphins to coach the pass rush for the 2011 season.

As a player, Cox spent 12 years in the NFL and was selected to three Pro Bowls (1992, 1994 and 1995) as a Dolphin and won a Super Bowl (2001) as a New England Patriot. Cox coached under Atlanta Defensive Coordinator Mike Nolan when they were both with the Miami Dolphins in 2011.

Cox and his wife, Kim, have four daughters, Lavonda, Brittani, Kelli and Chiquita, and a son, Bryan, Jr.





Joe Danna

Defensive Backs
3rd season with Falcons

Joe Danna enters his third season as the Falcons defensive backs coach and is responsible for working alongside Secondary Coach Tim Lewis coaching the safeties and corners. In 2013, Danna worked with rookie cornerback Desmond Trufant during his Pro Football Focus All-Rookie Team debut season.

In 2012, safety William Moore made the Pro Bowl with 105 tackles, eight passes defended, four interceptions, four tackles for loss, two forced fumbles and one fumble recovery. Moore also grabbed NFC Defensive Player of the Week against the Saints in Week 13.

Danna was a wide receiver at Central Michigan University (1995-98) and remained with the Chippewas following his playing career to serve as a student assistant (1999) and then as a graduate assistant (2000). Following a season as graduate assistant at the University of Georgia (2001), Danna returned to his alma mater where for the next four seasons he served as wide receivers coach (2002, 2005) and safeties coach (2003-04). He spent the next two seasons as the defensive backs coach at Georgia Southern (2006) and James Madison (2007) before joining the Falcons for 2008-09.

After his first stop in Atlanta, Danna served two years as the Miami Dolphins assistant defensive backs coach. The Dolphins pass defense ranked eighth in the NFL in 2010. Danna and his wife Nicole, have two sons, Luke and Zack, and a daughter, Lindsey.



Wade Harman

Assistant Offensive Line
1st season with Falcons

Wade Harman is embarking on his first season with the Falcons after spending the last 15 years with the Baltimore Ravens coaching staff. Harman served as the tight ends coach in Baltimore the past six seasons and grabbed Super Bowl rings twice during his tenure. Harman coached tight ends Shannon Sharpe, Todd Heap, Dennis Pitta and Ed Dixon during his time in Baltimore and was the longest tenured member of the Ravens coaching staff and the only coach to be a part of both of Baltimore's Super Bowl winning teams (2000 & 2012).

Before taking the job with the Ravens, Harman spent the 1997-98 seasons as an assistant in Minnesota. The Vikings went 15-1 in 1998 but would lose to the Falcons in the NFC Championship Game.

The Falcons will provide Harman a nearly reconstructed offensive line after giving up 44 sacks last season and he'll serve as the assistant to new offensive line coach Mike Tice.

Before the NFL, the Corydon, Iowa native began his coaching career in 1987 at Utah State. He served as a graduate assistant before taking his talents to the University of the Pacific in 1992. He would coach running backs and wide receivers for four years before taking an offensive coordinator position at Morningside College.

Harman attended Wayne Community High School before going to Drake University. He is married to Angie Harman, with whom he has two daughters, Madison and Rylee, and a son named Hunter.





Tim Lewis

Secondary
5th season with Falcons



This season will be Lewis' fifth year with the Falcons. For the 2012 season, the Falcons finished 10th in passing yards allowed and fifth in interceptions in the NFL. Under the leadership of Lewis, safety William Moore made his first Pro Bowl in 2012.

Lewis was the 11th overall pick of the 1983 draft and played four seasons with the Packers before a neck injury cut his career short. Lewis finished his brief career with 16 interceptions and a Packers record with a 99-yard interception return against the Los Angeles Rams in 1984.

Lewis starting his coaching career in the college ranks, coaching at Texas A&M (1987-88) as a graduate assistant coach, Southern Methodist University (SMU) (1989-1992) and the University of Pittsburgh (1993-94), his alma mater, as the defensive backs coach.

His first pro job was with the Pittsburgh Steelers (1995-99) as the defensive backs coach before being promoted to defensive coordinator (2000-03). In his four seasons as the Steelers defensive coordinator, he never had unit ranked lower than ninth in overall defense. The Steelers defense ranked as high as No. 1 for the 2001 season.

Following his time with the Pittsburgh Steelers, he moved on to work under Tom Coughlin with the New York Giants as defensive coordinator (2004-06), the Panthers (2007-08) and the Seahawks (2009).

He and his wife, Shawn, have two daughters, Erin and Chelsea Anne, and a son, Bryce.



Glenn Pires

Linebackers
7th season with Falcons

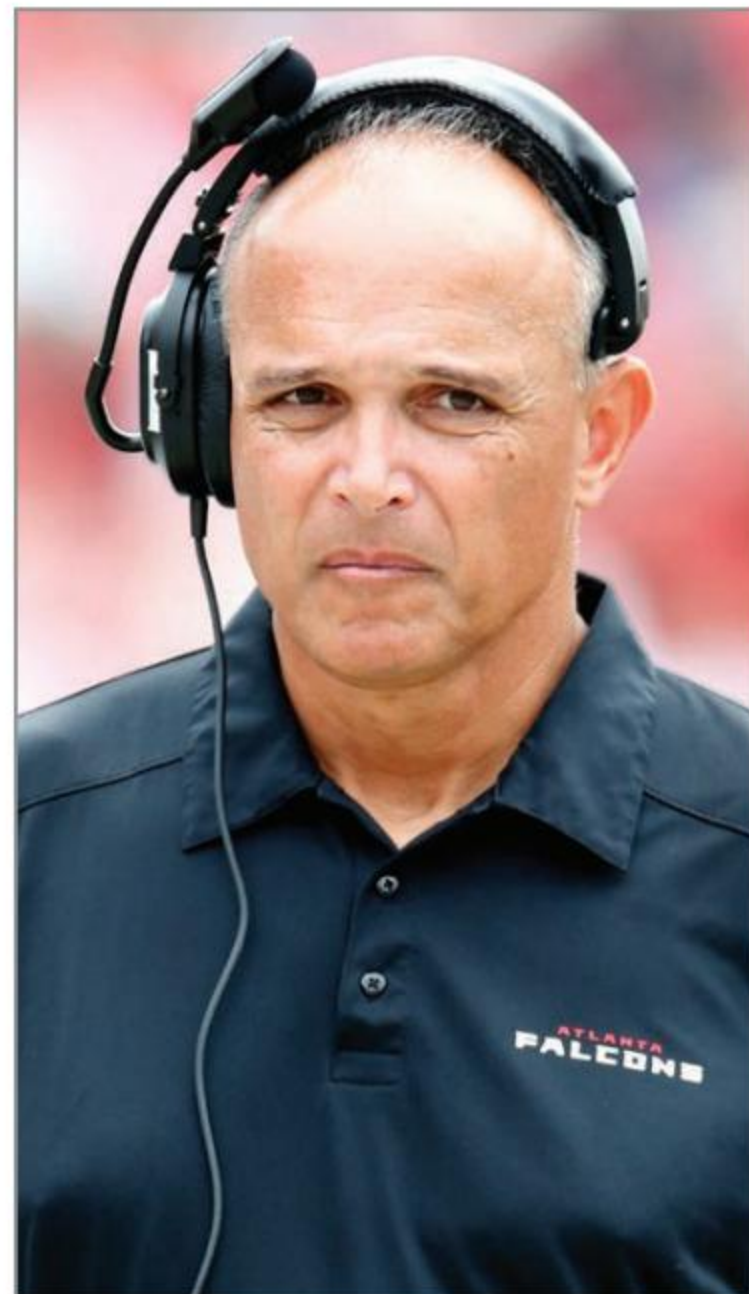
Glenn Pires will be entering his 19th season overall in the NFL and his seventh season with the Falcons. From 2008-2012, Pires' linebackers helped the Atlanta defense allow the second fewest points per game in the NFL (19.8). In 2011, Pires' linebackers enabled the Falcons defense to finish sixth in the League in rush defense, allowing opponents to an average of just 97 yards per contest.

Atlanta's defense held eight of its 16 opponents to under 100 yards rushing, including four of its last eight games. This gritty defense also stopped opponents to the tune of just 37 scores in trips to the red zone for a 78.7 percentage, second-best red zone efficiency in the entire NFL in 2011.

Pires' first coaching job was as an assistant coach a Melrose High School (Mass.), before coaching collegiately at Dartmouth, Syracuse and Michigan State from 1985-1995. His first NFL job came in 1996 when Pires accepted the linebackers job with the Cardinals. After five seasons in Arizona, Pires made stops in Detroit (2001-02) and Miami (2003-07).

Pires graduated from Springfield (Mass.) College and was a four-year letterman as an offensive lineman. His high school athletic and coaching achievements at New Bedford High School granted his induction into the school's Hall of Fame in 2002.

Pires is married to Lynn Caron and has two children, Michael and Jackie, who are currently attending Springfield College.





Chris Scelfo

Tight Ends
7th season with Falcons

Chris Scelfo has spent the last 28 years coaching football at the collegiate and professional level and 2014 will mark his seventh season with the Falcons. In 2013, Scelfo coached Tony Gonzalez in his 17th and final year in the NFL before the future Hall of Famer retired. Gonzalez recorded 859 yards through 83 receptions and eight touchdowns during his final farewell tour under Scelfo. The Louisiana native worked closely with the 14-time Pro Bowler when he arrived in Atlanta in 2009.

Scelfo came to Atlanta by way of Tulane University, where he spent eight years as one of the most decorated and successful head coaches in the history of Green Wave Football. Scelfo became the school's leader for games coached with 94 and led his Tulane teams to a 1998 Liberty Bowl championship and a 2002 Hawaii Bowl victory. Scelfo was an assistant head coach at Georgia from 1996-1998 under head coach Jim Donnan.

The Northeast Louisiana alum earned his bachelor's and master's degrees and was a graduate assistant for two years. Scelfo was a three-year letterman and team captain for the football team.

Scelfo is married to wife, Nancy, and they have two kids, Joseph and Sarah Beth. Frank Scelfo, Chris' brother, is currently the quarterbacks coach with the Jaguars. Scelfo is the co-author of "Fourth and New Orleans," which tells the story of the Tulane Green Wave during Hurricane Katrina. His son Joseph is a center at South Alabama.



Eric Sutulovich

Assistant Special Teams
6th season with Falcons

Sutulovich's NFL coaching experience began with the Houston Texans inaugural campaign in 2002, when he kicked off a four-year stint with that franchise as assistant special teams coach. Following some time at the college ranks, Sutulovich worked as an offensive assistant for the Detroit Lions in 2008 before joining the Falcons in 2009.

Sutulovich started as an offensive graduate assistant at Louisiana Tech in 1997 and completed stints at the University of Pittsburgh before his assistant special teams role with the Texans (2002-05) and the University of Kansas in 2006.

He joined the Falcons after one season in Detroit and has found success with special teams coordinator Keith Armstrong. Kicker Matt Bryant has rewritten much of Atlanta's statistical history book in that department and the team consistently ranks in the top half of the NFL in starting field position and net punt return yards. In 2010, the Falcons finished first in the League in opponents' average starting field position after kickoffs.

Sutulovich will have what should be an outstanding new opportunity this year to work with return man Devin Hester, who is already in the NFL record books. Hester, has 13 punt returns for scores in his career (most in League history).

Sutulovich and his wife, Melissa, have two daughters (Sage and Ellie) and two sons (Maddax and Gabe).





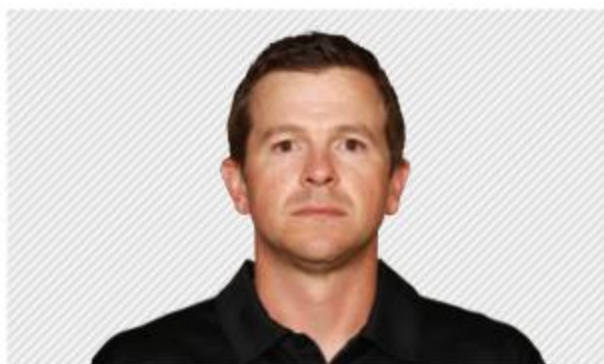
Andrew Thacker

Defensive Assistant
1st season with Falcons

Thacker is entering both his first year with the Falcons and his first year as a coach in the NFL. He began his football coaching career at Southern Mississippi as a safeties coach for a year. Prior to joining the Golden Eagles, he spent three seasons as a defensive graduate assistant coach at Oklahoma State.

During his time with the Cowboys, Thacker assisted with the development of the linebacker corps, which included Caleb Lavey and Shaun Lewis. Both Lavey and Lewis played their ways to All-Big 12 Honorable Mention honors in 2012. Before joining the coaching staff in Stillwater, Thacker had spent two seasons with UCF.

The 29-year old is a Cumming, Ga. native and an alum of Gainesville High School, which he helped lead to a 13-1 record in 2002 and their first state semifinal appearance since 1985. He was a four-year letterwinner as a safety at Furman University, where he was named 2004 Southern Conference Freshman of the Year. The Paladins went 35-15 during Thacker's four-year stint and made it to three NCAA FCS playoff appearances, which included a semifinal run in 2005. Thacker earned a degree in political science and Spanish at Furman University with spots on the Southern Conference Academic Honor Roll all four years and was a GTE Academic All-District honoree (2005-2007). Thacker is married to the former Liza Calhoun.



Glenn Thomas

Quarterbacks
8th season with Falcons

Thomas is heading into his seventh season overall with the Falcons and third as quarterbacks coach. He was previously an offensive assistant for four years.

In 2008, when Thomas arrived in Atlanta at the beginning of the Mike Smith and Matt Ryan era, the Falcons finished second in the entire NFL in rushing offense and sixth in total offense. Two years later, the NFC South Division champions ranked third in the League in time of possession and also third in third-down conversion percentage. In two seasons with Thomas as the quarterbacks coach, Ryan has flourished. The signal-caller set franchise-best marks in passing yards, attempts, touchdown passes, completions and completion percentage during the 2012 campaign. Last season, despite being without injured receiver Julio Jones most of the way, Ryan passed his way to career-highs in completions and attempts while recording his second best marks in completion percentage and yards.

Thomas was a student assistant at Texas Tech from 1998 through 2001 before working as a graduate assistant at Midwestern State from 2001 through 2004. He was then promoted to offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach at Midwestern State. In between college seasons, Thomas gained NFL coaching experience with the Baltimore Ravens and Jacksonville Jaguars during the offseason.





Mike Tice

Offensive Line
1st season with Falcons

The Falcons hired Mike Tice in January 2014 to lead the offensive line. Tice joins the Falcons after serving as offensive coordinator for the Bears in 2012.

During Tice's second year in Chicago (2011), the o-line helped Chicago produce 2,015 rushing yards for the season, just the second time in 22 seasons that the team rushed for more than 2,000 yards.

Tice began his coaching career with Minnesota as the tight ends coach (1996) under Head Coach Dennis Green. Tice was promoted to offensive line coach in 1997-2001. Tice's second year as offensive line coach proved to be one of the best seasons in franchise history as the Vikings finished with a 15-1 record, ranked 25th in the League in sacks and scored an NFL record of 556 points. Under Tice's leadership, three Vikings Pro Bowlers came from the o-line: Jeff Christy, Randall McDaniel and Todd Steussie. He was promoted to Vikings head coach from 2002-2005.

Tice also coached in Jacksonville as the assistant head coach (2006-2009) where he worked with current Falcons Head Coach Mike Smith (2006-2007) and Falcons Offensive Coordinator Dirk Koetter (2007-2009).

As a player, Tice played for the Seattle Seahawks (1981-1988, 1990-1991), Washington Redskins (1989) and Minnesota Vikings (1992-1993, 1995).



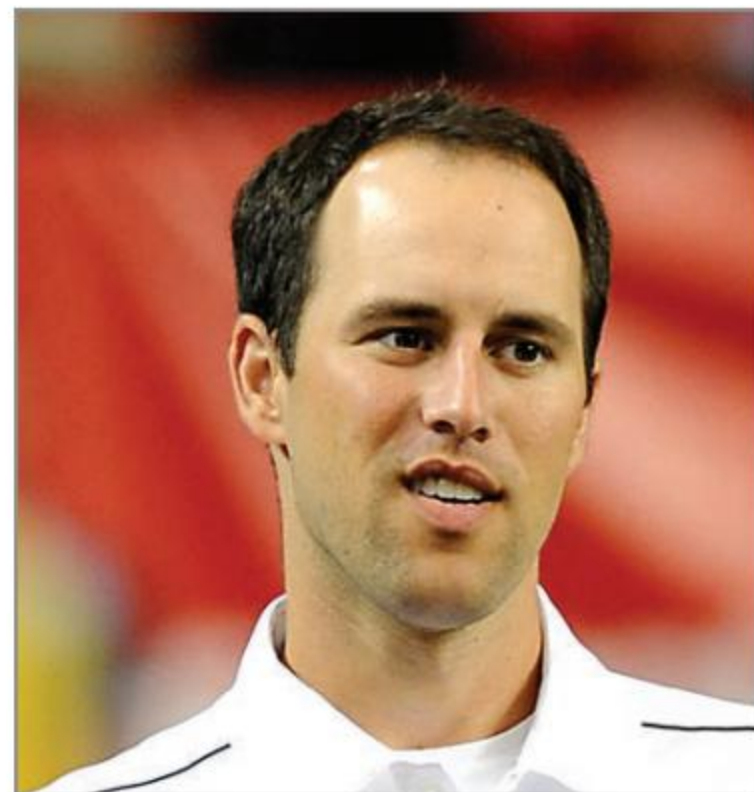
Andrew Weidinger

Offensive Assistant
8th season with Falcons

Andrew Weidinger begins his second season as the team's offensive assistant after serving four years as the assistant to the head coach/offense. In Weidinger's new role, he had many additional tasks as offensive assistant that include managing data, research, daily practice scripts, schedules, calendars and assisting with the wide receivers.

In his first season as the offensive assistant, Weidinger assisted Terry Robiskie with the wide receivers.

The 2012 Falcons offense ranked top 10 in the NFL in third down and scoring efficiency, red zone points scored, red zone scoring efficiency, first downs per game, scoring offense and passing offense.



Devin Bonik

Assistant to the Head Coach
3rd season with Falcons

Bonik enters his third season with the Falcons as the assistant to the head coach. He provides administrative help to Head Coach Mike Smith. Bonik held the same position in 2011 with Tennessee Titans under Head Coach Mike Munchak. During his stay in Tennessee, Bonik aided in coaching staff decisions, personnel evaluation and coordinated the Titans practice schedule and football calendar. He spent seven seasons with the Jacksonville Jaguars from 2003-2009, working under Head Coach Jack Del Rio. Bonik and Smith were on the same Jaguars staff from 2003 to 2007.



Athletic Performance



Marty Lauzon

Director of Sports Medicine
and Performance



A.J. Neibel

Head Strength &
Conditioning



Jonas Beauchemin

Assistant Strength
& Conditioning



Danny Long

Assistant Athletic Trainer



Eric Avila

Assistant Athletic Trainer

Player Personnel/Football Operations



Lionel Vital

Director of Player Personnel



DeJuan Polk

Director of Pro Personnel



Steve Sabo

Director of College Scouting



Nick Polk

Director of Football
Operations



Bob Kronenberg

Pro Scout



Mike Ross

Pro Scout



Mark Olson

National Scout



Billy Devaney

Western Regional Scout



Shepley Heard

Eastern Regional Scout



Russ Bollinger

Area Scout



Tokunbo Abanikanda

Area Scout



Sae Woon Jo

Area Scout



Mike Potts

Area Scout



Anthony Robinson

Area Scout



Karl Pierburg

Senior Director of
Football Systems



Chase Falivene

Salary Cap/Player
Personnel Assistant



Kevin Winston

Senior Director of
Player Engagement



Laura Moore

Executive Assistant to
General Manager



Rebecca Hill

Coordinator of Scouting
Administration



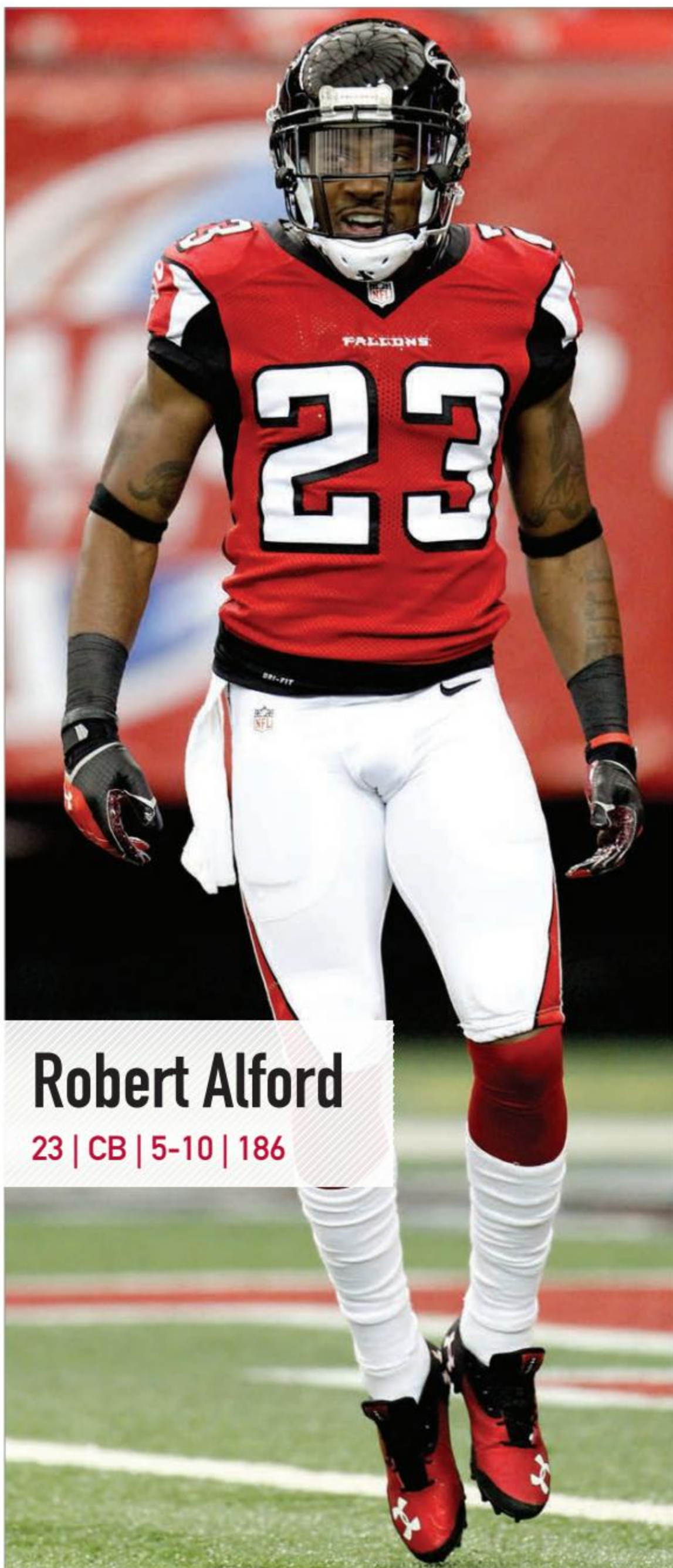
Scott Sika

Scouting Assistant



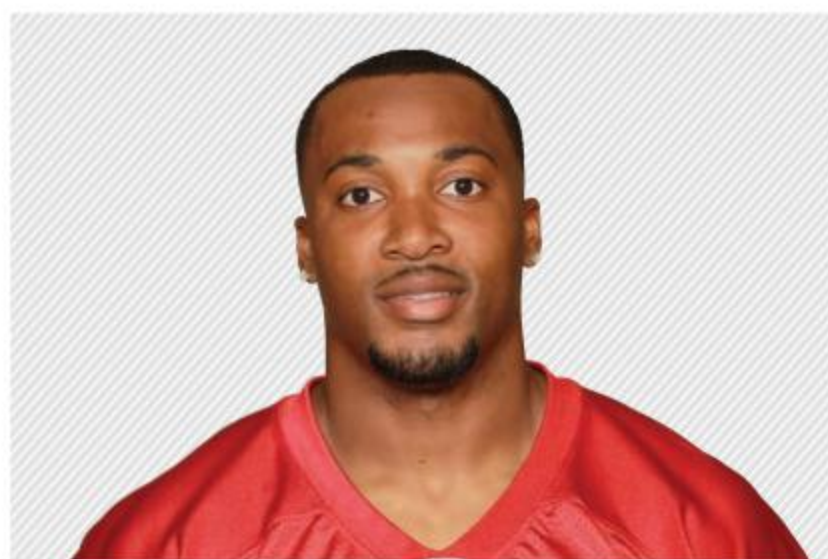
Nate Tice

Scouting Assistant



Robert Alford

23 | CB | 5-10 | 186



Birthdate: 11/1/1988

College: Southeastern Louisiana

Year: 2

Drafted 60th Pick, 2nd Round, 2013 Draft

2013 Season

Posted 36 solo tackles, 43 total tackles, seven passes defended and forced a fumble and recovered it in his rookie debut.

Received his first career interception in his first game as a Falcon against the Saints and finished with two for the season.

Career

Alford had a career-high nine tackles in a 27-26 win versus the Washington Redskins.

Recovered game-winning fumble in Atlanta's 34-31 OT win over Buffalo in 2013.

Recorded 39 tackles (35 solo), including five tackles-for-loss, four interceptions and eight pass breakups his senior season at Southeastern Louisiana.

Family

Alford was born and raised in Hammond, La.

His brother, Fred Booker, played in the NFL for the New Orleans Saints.

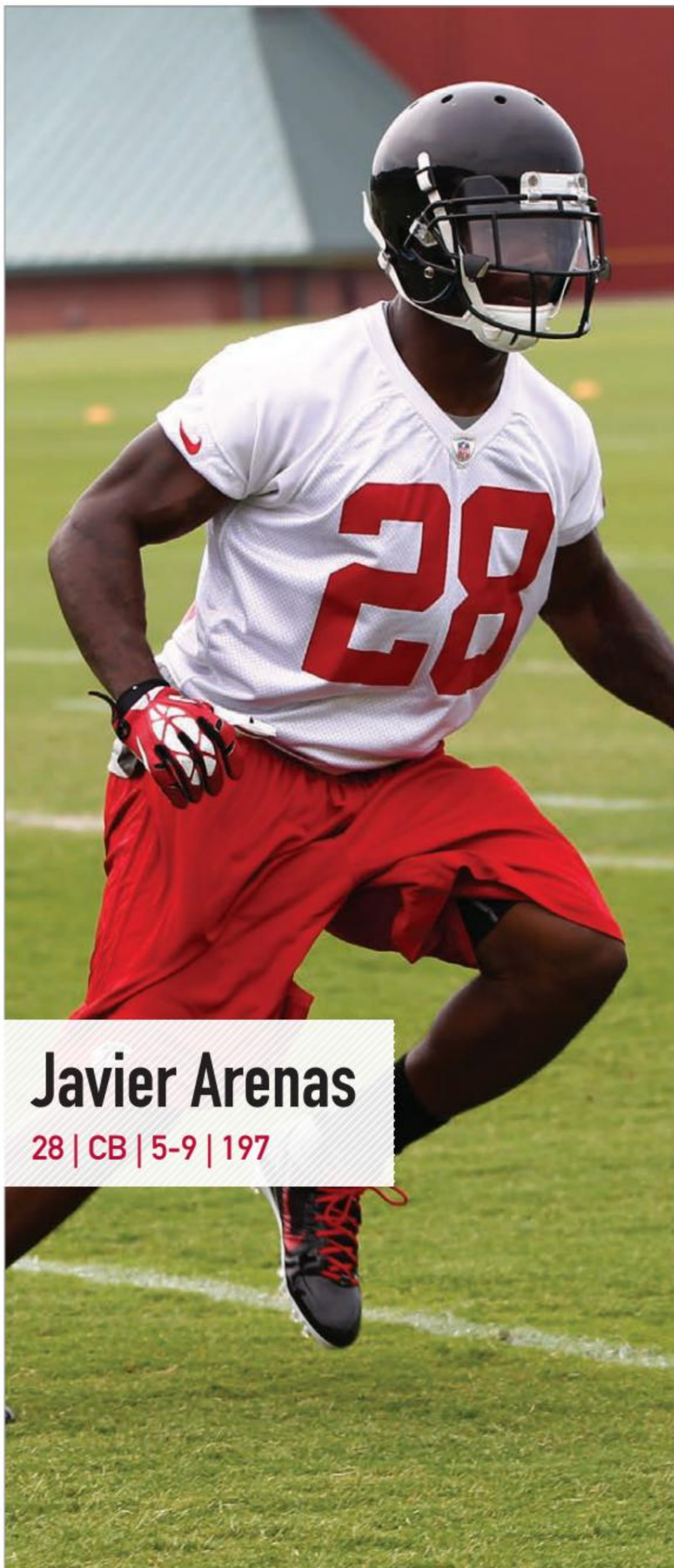
Another brother, Duke Adams, played safety for the Detroit Lions.

He was the first player drafted from Southeastern Louisiana since the school brought back football in 2003.

Interesting Facts

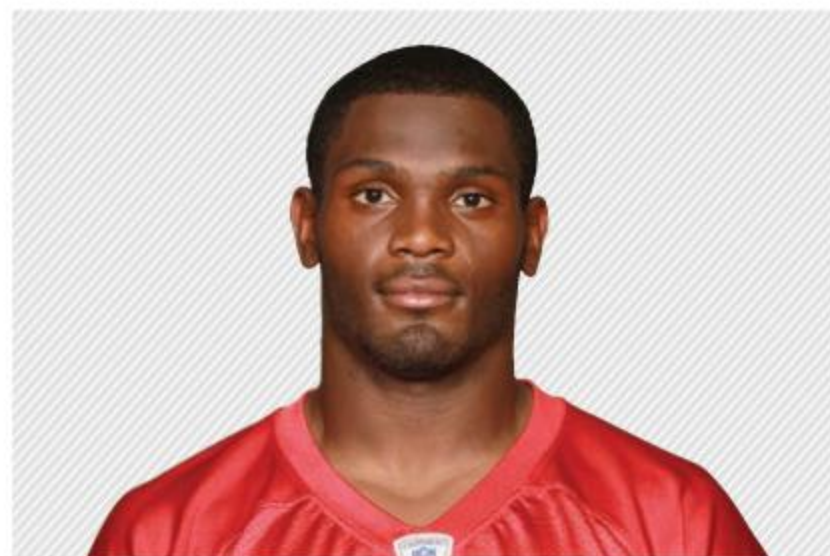
Named first-team All-Southland conference on two occasions.

First team all-District 7-5A selection at wide receiver, and finished second in the 400-meter dash at the 2007 LHSA Track and Field Championships.



Javier Arenas

28 | CB | 5-9 | 197



Birthdate: 10/28/1987

College: Alabama

Year: 5

Free Agent, 2014

2013 Season

Had 11 solo tackles, 12 total tackles and one sack for the Arizona Cardinals.

Returned 23 kickoffs for 493 yards (a career-best 21.4 yards per return) and included a career-long 46-yard return against the Saints in Week 3.

Career

Has a total of 148 tackles (126 solo), five sacks, three forced fumbles, two fumble recoveries and 22 passes defended.

The versatile Arenas also served as a punt and kick returner, notching 106 punt returns for 1,035 yards (9.8 avg.) and 73 kickoff returns for 1,541 yards (21.1 avg.).

He has also seen action on offense, scoring his first career touchdown on a 7-yard run in 2011.

Family

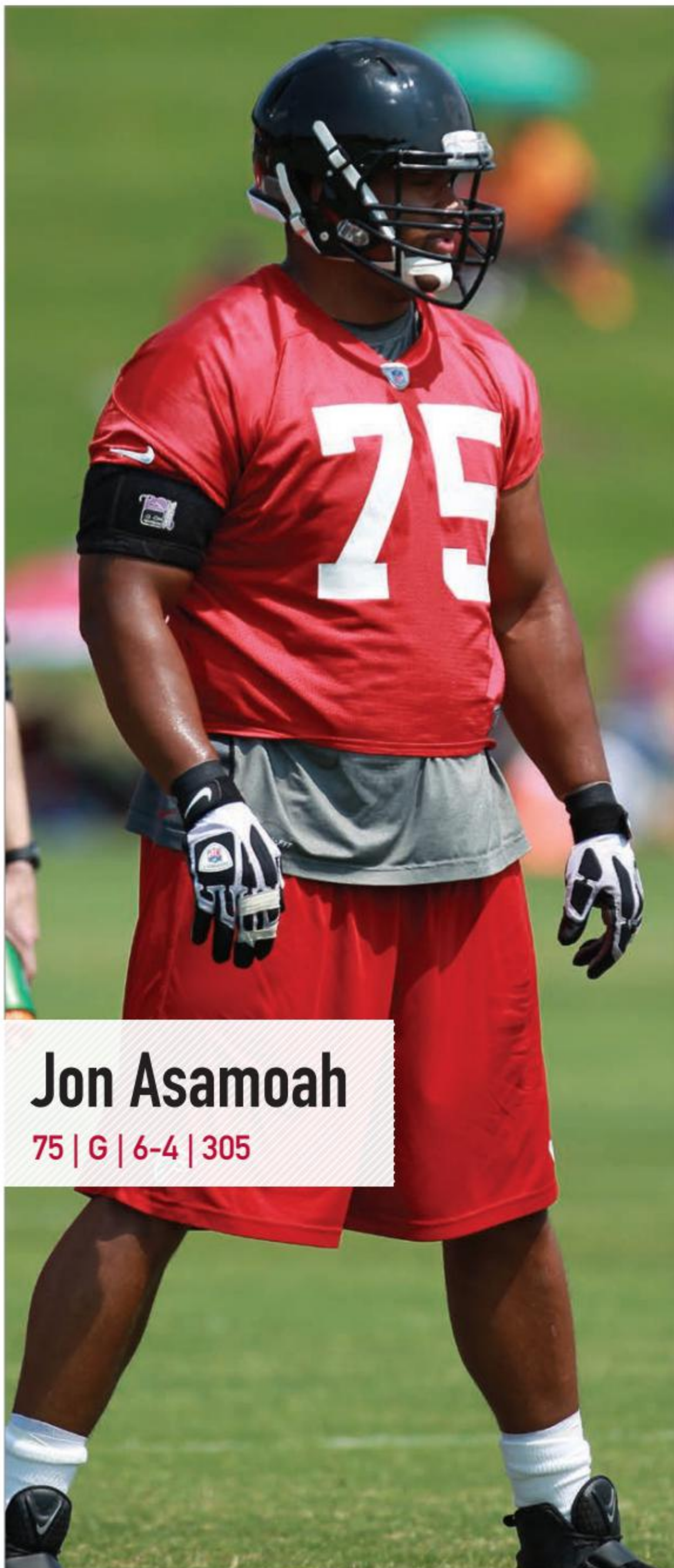
Born and raised in Tampa, Fla.

He is the cousin of NBA All-Star Gilbert Arenas and also has a brother, Armando Murillo, who started at cornerback for Nebraska in 2007 and 2008.

Interesting Facts

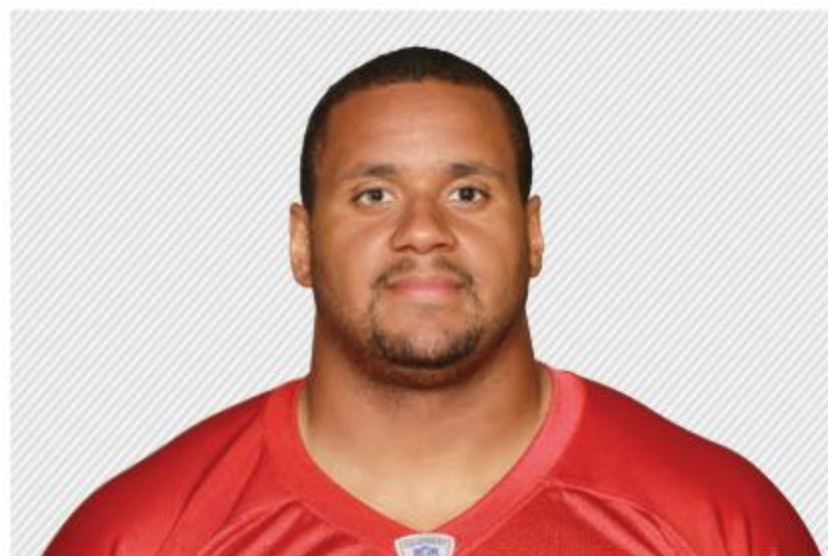
As a senior in 2009, Arenas earned first-team All-America and first-team All-SEC honors after helping the Crimson Tide to a BCS National Championship.

He became the first college football player to ever amass over 1,500 punt return yards and 2,000 kickoff return yards in a career.



Jon Asamoah

75 | G | 6-4 | 305



Birthdate: 7/21/1988

College: Illinois

Year: 5

Free Agent, 2014

2013 Season

Asamoah appeared in 14 games (starting nine) helping the Chiefs offense average 337.3 yards per game, including 128.5 yards per game on the ground, 10th best in the League.

Started in all final eight games of Kansas City's NFL-best 9-0 start to last season.

Career

Since becoming a starter in 2011, he helped anchor an offensive line that averaged 322.4 total yards per game and 132.2 rushing yards per game, which ranked second in the AFC during that span.

Anchored an offensive line that rushed for more than 300 yards on three occasions during his senior season (2009) at Illinois.

Family

He was raised in Park Forest, Ill. just south of Chicago.

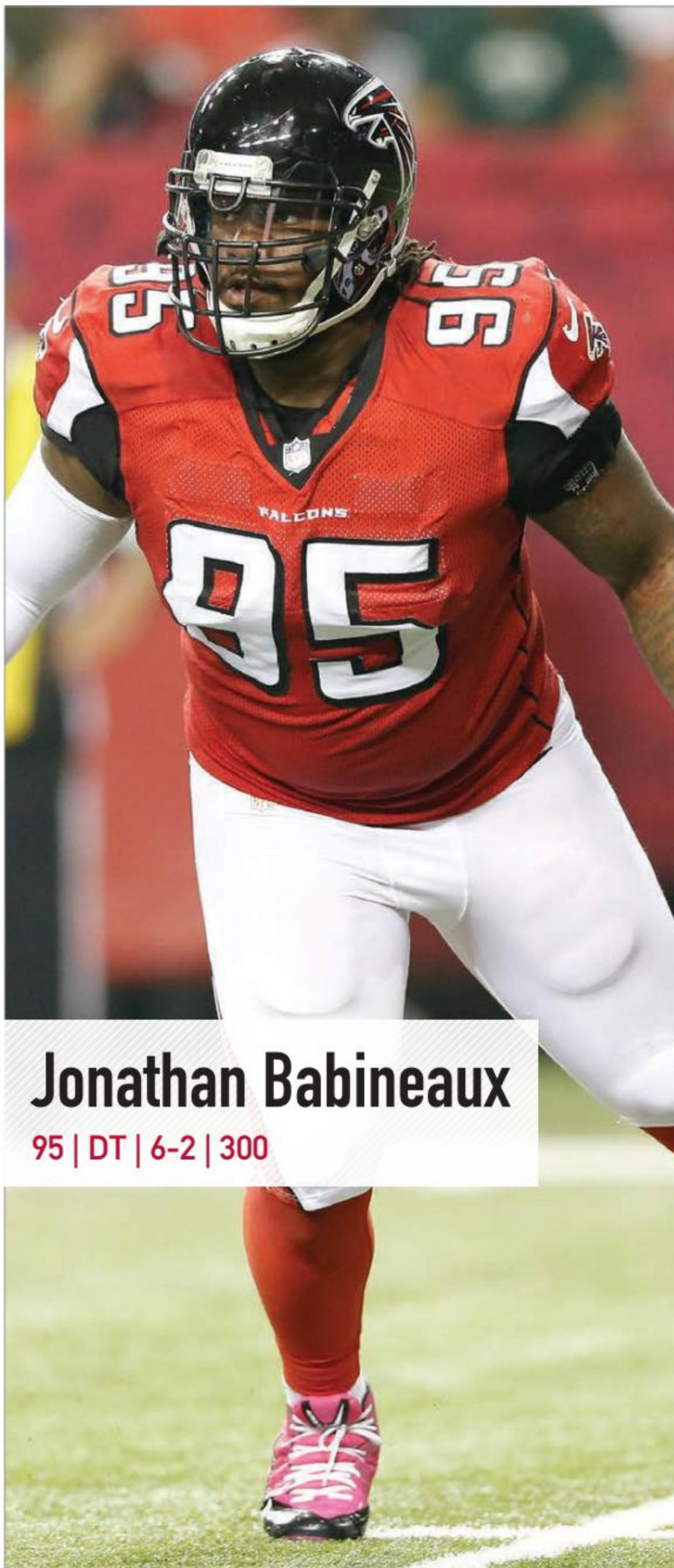
The son of Geraldine Terstegge and Samuel Asamoah.

Interesting Facts

Earned second-team All-Big Ten honors as a senior and was selected to the National Football Foundation's 16-man Scholar-Athlete team.

Asamoah was awarded the 2010 Big Ten Conference Medal of Honor for his proficiency as both a scholar and as an athlete.

Was a two-time Academic All-State selection at Rich East High School while also lettering three years in basketball.



Jonathan Babineaux

95 | DT | 6-2 | 300



Birthdate: 10/12/1981

College: Iowa

Year: 10

Drafted 59th Pick, 2nd Round, 2005 Draft

2013 Season

Started all 16 games for the Falcons and posted 35 solo tackles, 48 total tackles, one sack, one forced fumble with two fumble recoveries and a team-best seven tackles for loss.

Posted eight combined tackles Week 10 against the Seahawks, his highest single-game total since the 2009 season.

Career

Left Iowa with 131 career tackles (39 tackles for a loss).

His six sacks in 2009 were an NFL-best for all defensive tackles.

Compiled 321 total tackles, 22.5 sacks, three interceptions, eight forced fumbles, eight fumble recoveries and 20 passes defended in nine seasons with Atlanta.

Family

Jonathan is the youngest of five children and was born in Port Arthur, Texas.

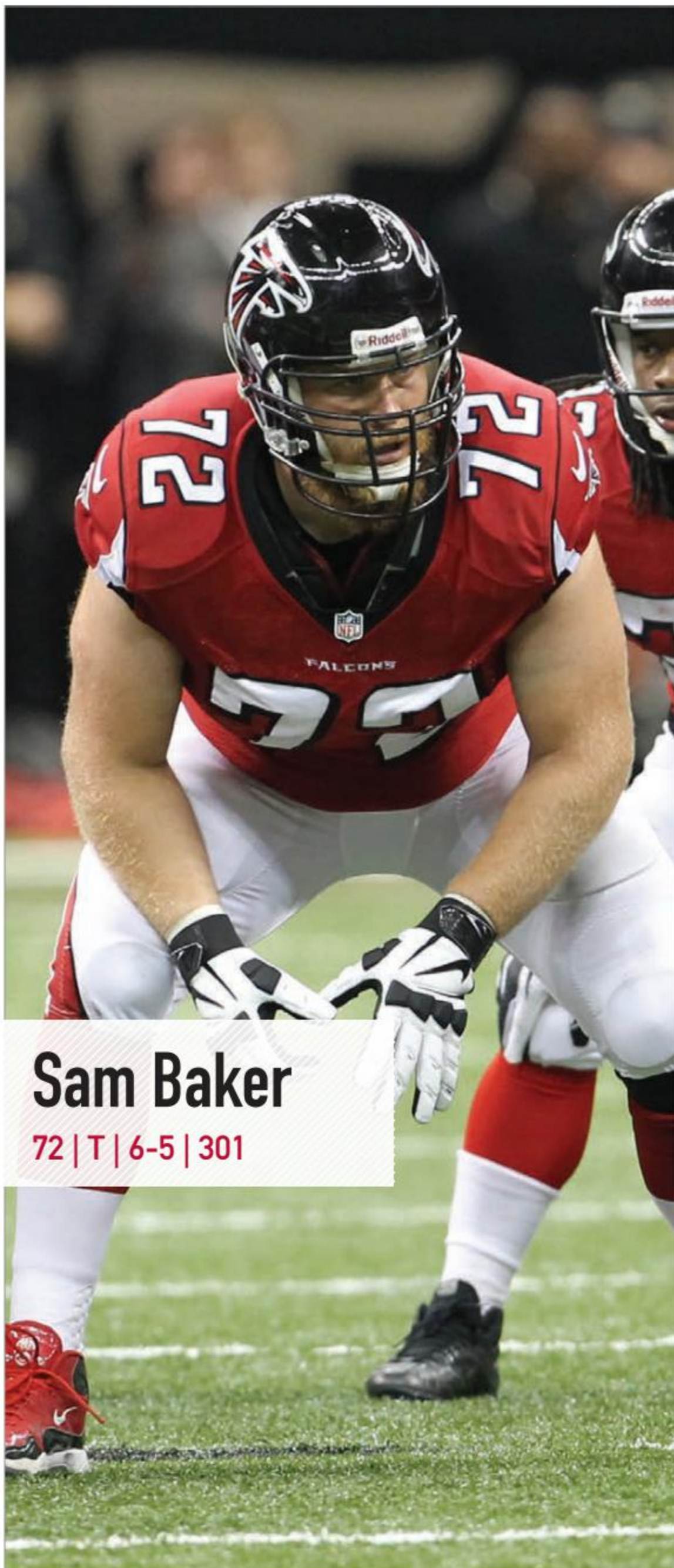
His brother Jordan played safety for the Seahawks (2004-10) and Titans (2011-12) and owns 600 total career tackles and 12 interceptions.

Interesting Facts

At Iowa, he played fullback as a true freshman before moving to defensive tackle.

In high school, he averaged 40 yards per punt while also playing fullback, linebacker and defensive end.

Babineaux also played on the No. 1-ranked basketball team in the state of Texas.



Sam Baker

72 | T | 6-5 | 301



Birthdate: 5/30/1985

College: USC

Year: 7

Drafted 21st Pick, 1st Round, 2008 Draft

2013 Season

Played and started in four games for the Falcons last season due to injury.

Started a left tackle in Atlanta's 32-24 win over St. Louis as Matt Ryan completed 33-of-43 passes for 374 yards and two touchdowns.

Career

Three-time First-team All-American at USC (2005-2007).

Atlanta traded two second-round picks (No. 34 and No. 48) and a fourth-round pick (No. 103) in order to take Baker as the 21st overall pick.

One of 12 semifinalists for the 2007 Lombardi Award.

2002 Super Prep All-American at Tustin High School in California.

Family

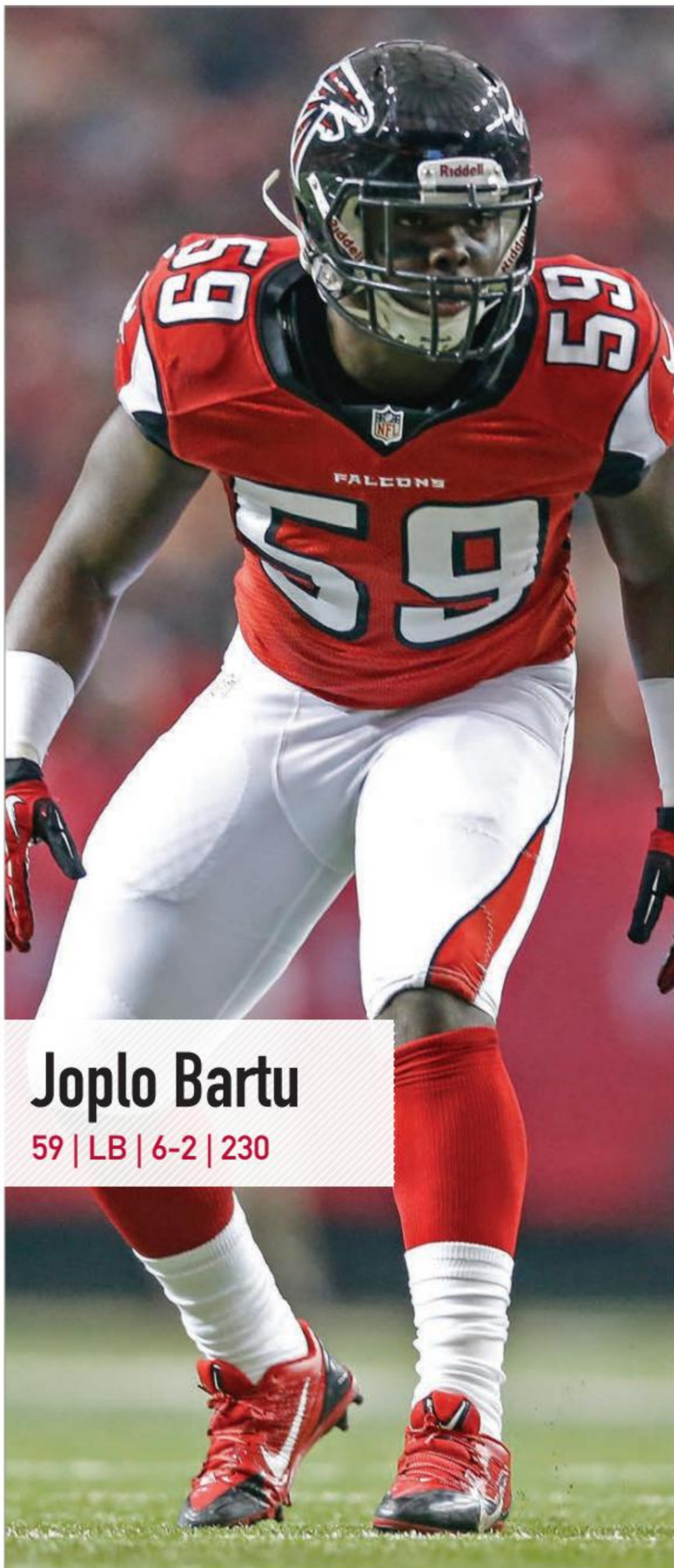
Sam's father, David, stands 6-foot-8 and played professional basketball in Europe before serving as the Commissioner of the Arena Football League. He is now the President/Executive Director of the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Sam is married to Antoinette Baker and has a brother, Ben, who was an offensive lineman at Duke.

Interesting Facts

In Baker's NFL debut, he got the start at left tackle and helped the Falcons amass a franchise single-game record 318 yards rushing vs. Detroit.

Played on the 2004 USC Trojans National Championship team.



Joplo Bartu

59 | LB | 6-2 | 230



Birthdate: 10/3/1989

College: Texas State

Year: 2

Undrafted Free Agent, 2013

2013 Season

Played in all 16 games, starting 13 and accumulating 96 total tackles with 53 being solo tackles as an undrafted rookie free agent.

He also posted 3.5 sacks and defended one pass.

Career

Earned National Player of the Week by collegeperformance.com and he received All-WAC honors after finishing with 17 tackles, eight tackles-for-loss, four sacks and a forced fumble that was recovered for a touchdown against New Mexico State his senior season.

Posted a career-high 11 combined tackles during Atlanta's Week 16 Monday Night Football trip to San Francisco last year.

Recorded 44 solo tackles his final four games at Texas State, including a season-high 13 against Navy.

Family

His mother, Esther Sando, migrated to the U.S. from Liberia.

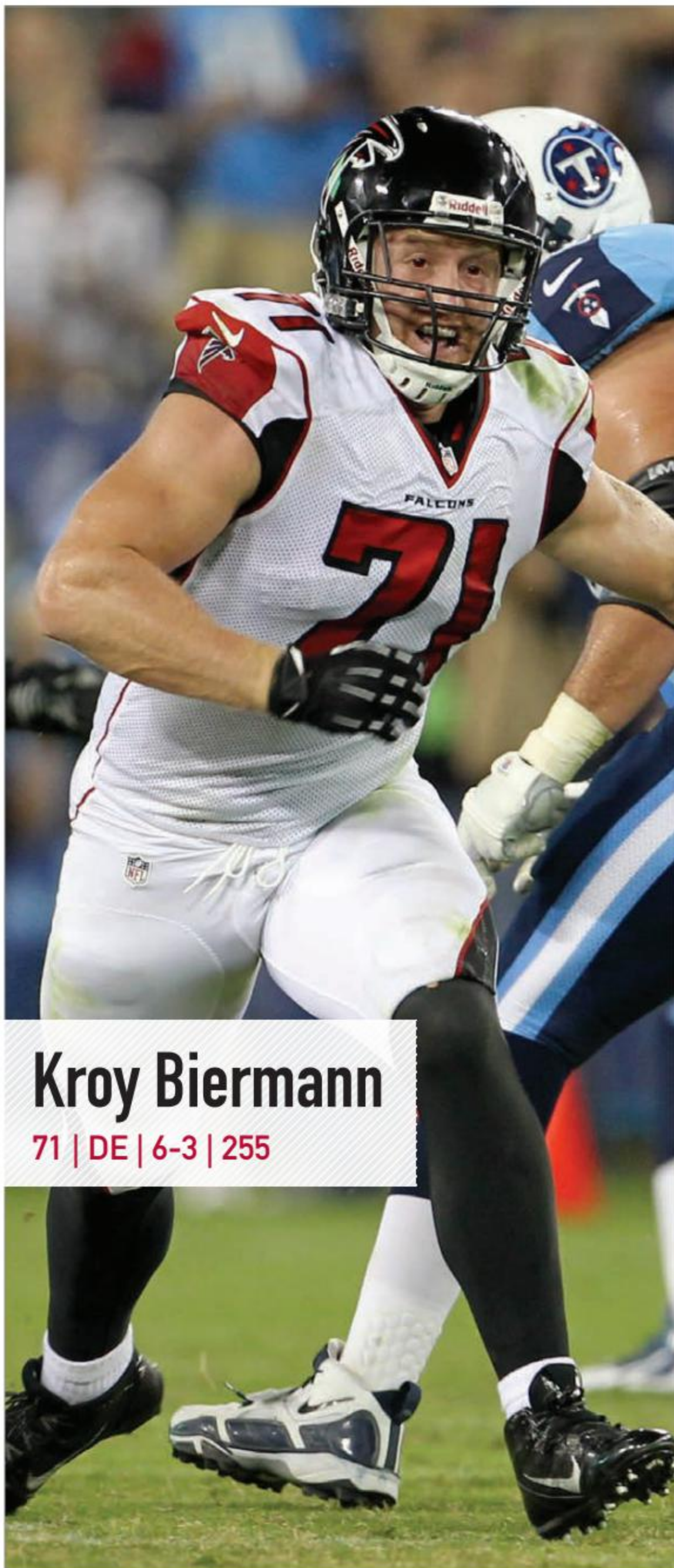
His father is Ester Jackson and his brother Wellington Deshield played defensive line at Texas State.

Interesting Facts

Joplo comes from a Liberian word for warrior, meaning strength.

Teammate Sean Weatherspoon nicknamed him "High Top Jop" because of his Kid 'n Play-style haircut.

Played tight end and linebacker at Waller High School in Texas.



Kroy Biermann

71 | DE | 6-3 | 255



Birthdate: 9/12/1985

College: Montana

Year: 7

Drafted 154th Pick, 5th Round, 2008 Draft

2013 Season

Had a shortened season due to Achilles injury, but still recorded five solo tackles and eight total tackles.

Career

Biermann has recorded 20 starts and 16.5 sacks in five seasons with the Falcons.

Had two interceptions that were both returned for touchdowns in 2011 and 2010 for 50 yards and 31 yards.

Has totaled 185 tackles (142 solo) in his six seasons with Atlanta.

In 2010, Biermann tipped a pass to himself, intercepted it and returned it for a 41-yard touchdown with 4:01 remaining to seal Atlanta's 20-10 win at Cleveland.

Family

Kroy and his wife Kim Zolciak have two children, Kroy Jagger Biermann, Jr. and Kash Kade Biermann.

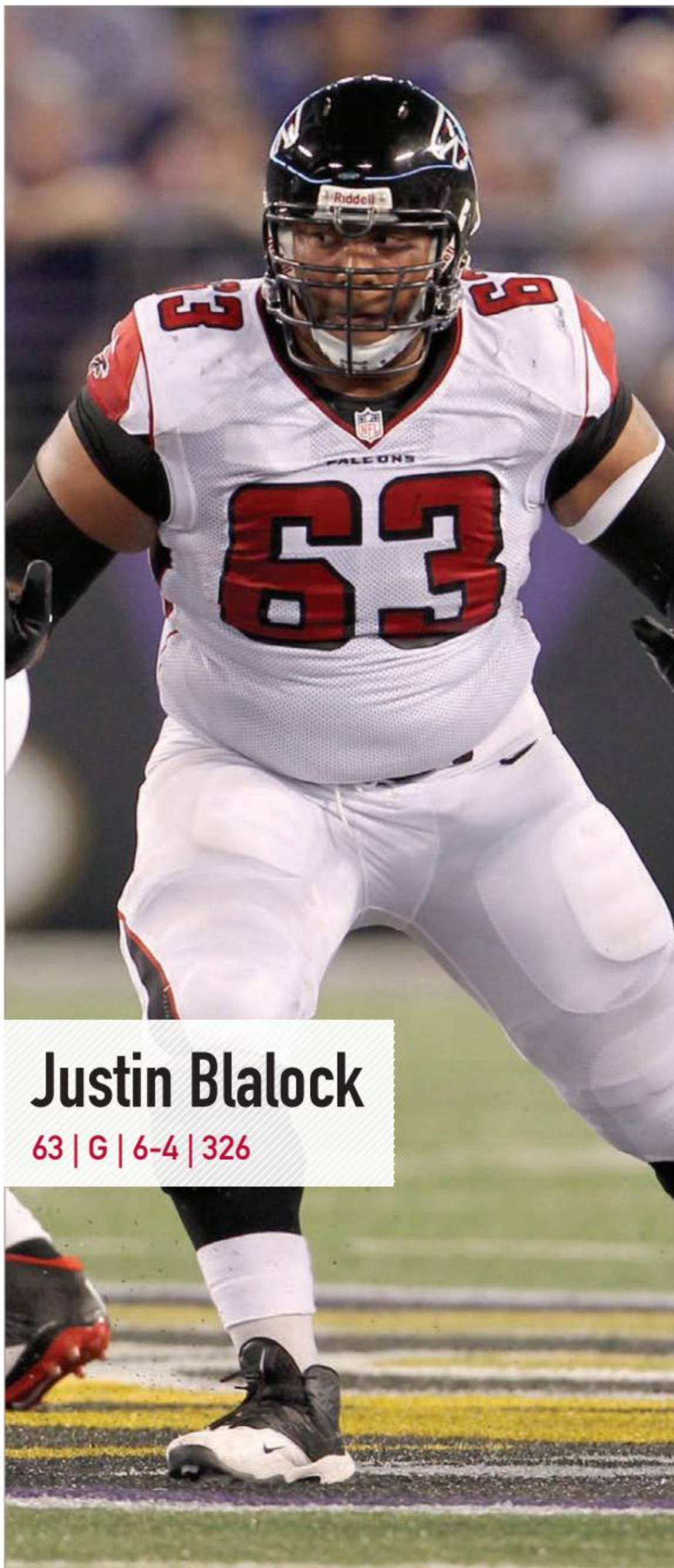
Each member of his immediate family has a name that starts with the letter "k".

Interesting Facts

In 2007 he was named Big Sky Conference Defensive MVP.

He became Montana's first recipient of the Buck Buchanan Award for top defensive player in Division I Football Championship Subdivision.

Injuries in Week 16 of 2009 forced Biermann into the kickoff role and he booted 67-, 58- and 54-yard kickoffs despite not attempting one since high school.



Justin Blalock

63 | G | 6-4 | 326



Birthdate: 12/20/1983

College: Texas

Year: 8

Drafted 39th Pick, 2nd Round, 2007 Draft

2013 Season

Started all 16 games at left guard last season for the Falcons.

Career

In a Falcons uniform has started all 16 games in a season in six out his first seven years and enters the 2014 season with 98 consecutive starts.

Consensus All-American at Texas in 2006 and also won the national championship in 2005.

Blalock was named a Lombardi Award finalist (the nation's top lineman) and an Outland Trophy finalist (nation's top interior lineman).

Blalock has started every game in each of the franchise's five winning seasons.

Family

His parents are Louis and Jackie Blalock Robinson.

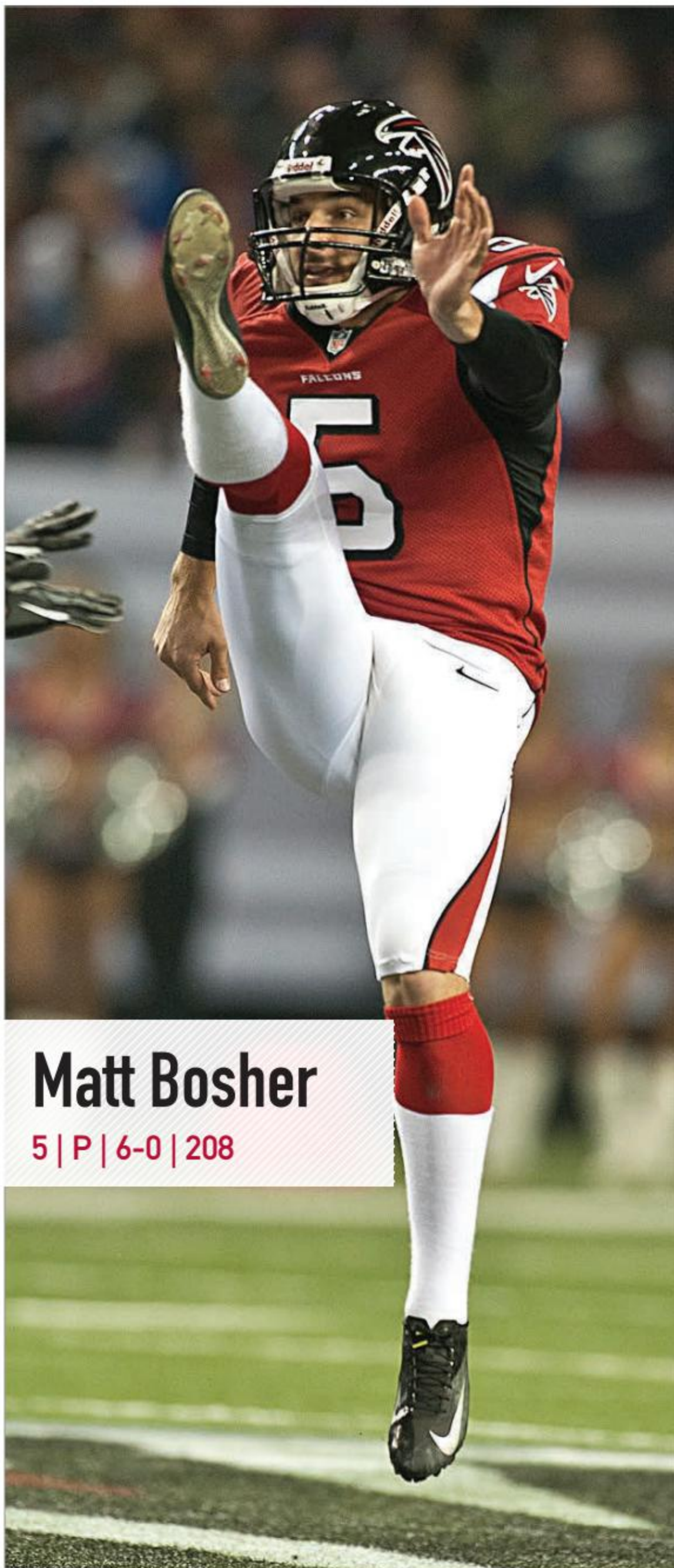
His cousin, Jonathan Goodwin, is a center for the Saints.

Interesting Facts

An All-State athlete in the shot-put and discus throw at Plano East Senior High School in Dallas, Texas, where he still holds the record of 63.75 feet.

At Plano H.S., he recorded 151 pancake blocks and anchored an offensive line that averaged over 300 rushing yards per game.

Became the first Texas lineman to start 50 consecutive games in a career at Texas and graduated with 51.



Matt Boshers

5 | P | 6-0 | 208



Birthdate: 10/18/1987

College: Miami (Fla.)

Year: 4

Drafted 192nd Pick, 6th Round, 2011 Draft

2013 Season

Punted 68 times for a 46.6 average and a net of 41.1 yards.

He landed 22 punts inside the 20-yard line and punted a long of 63 yards.

Career

Named to the All-ACC First Team (2009, 2010).

Punted five times for 267 yards and a 53.4 yards per punt average against Seattle in 2010.

Has punted 193 times in his three years with Atlanta for 8,759 yards (45.3 yards per punt).

Set a University of Miami record in September of 2010 by kicking his 14th consecutive field goal.

Named Pro Football Writers of America All-Rookie Team (2011).

Received Falcons Man of the Year (2012) recognizing community service and involvement.

Family

Boshers was born and raised in Jupiter, Fla. and attended Jupiter High School.

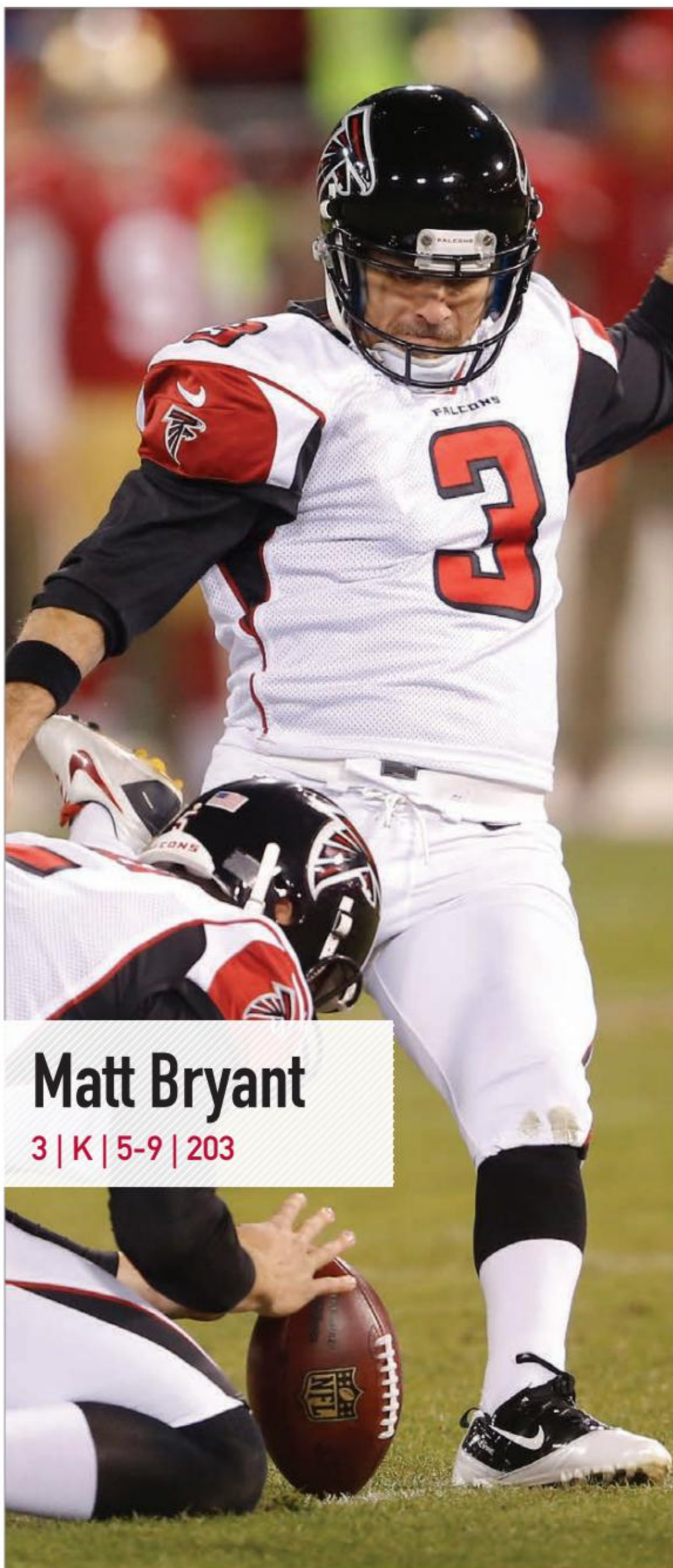
Interesting Facts

Booted a career-long 76-yard punt against Duke.

Rated the No. 1 placekicker in the country in 2005.

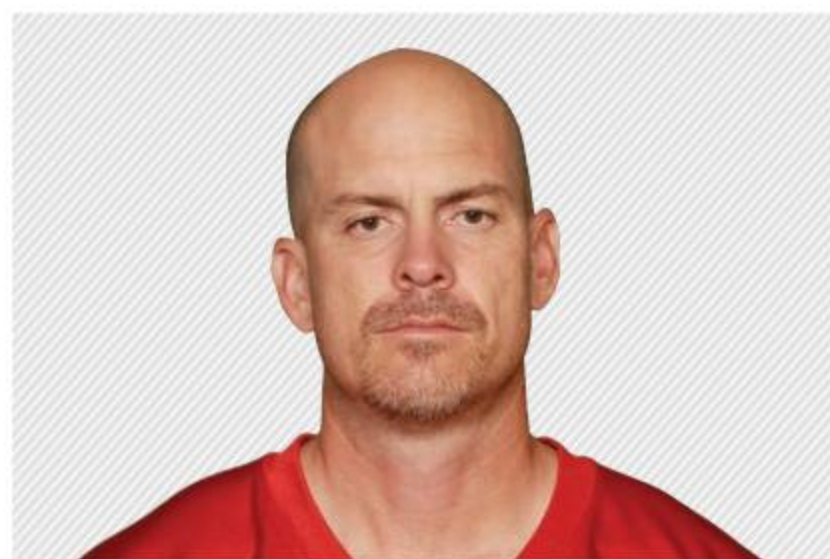
Boshers is the Falcons holder on field goals and extra points, including Matt Bryant's thrilling game-winning field goal to send Atlanta to the NFC Championship in 2012.

Earned All-ACC first team for kicking in 2009 and punting in 2010.



Matt Bryant

3 | K | 5-9 | 203



Birthdate: 5/29/1975

College: Baylor

Year: 13

Free Agent, 2009

2013 Season

Made 24 of 27 field goal attempts with the longest being 53 yards.

Connected on all 39 of his PATs last season and totaled 111 points.

Made a career-high five field goals of 50 or more yards last season including a 53-yarder against the Seahawks.

Career

Since joining Falcons in 2009 has connected on 95 of 108 FG's and his 88.0 FG percentage ranks third in NFL.

Kicked a career-long 62-yard field goal with Tampa Bay in 2006.

Ranks seventh at Baylor in all-time scoring with 105 points (21 field goals and 42 extra points).

Family

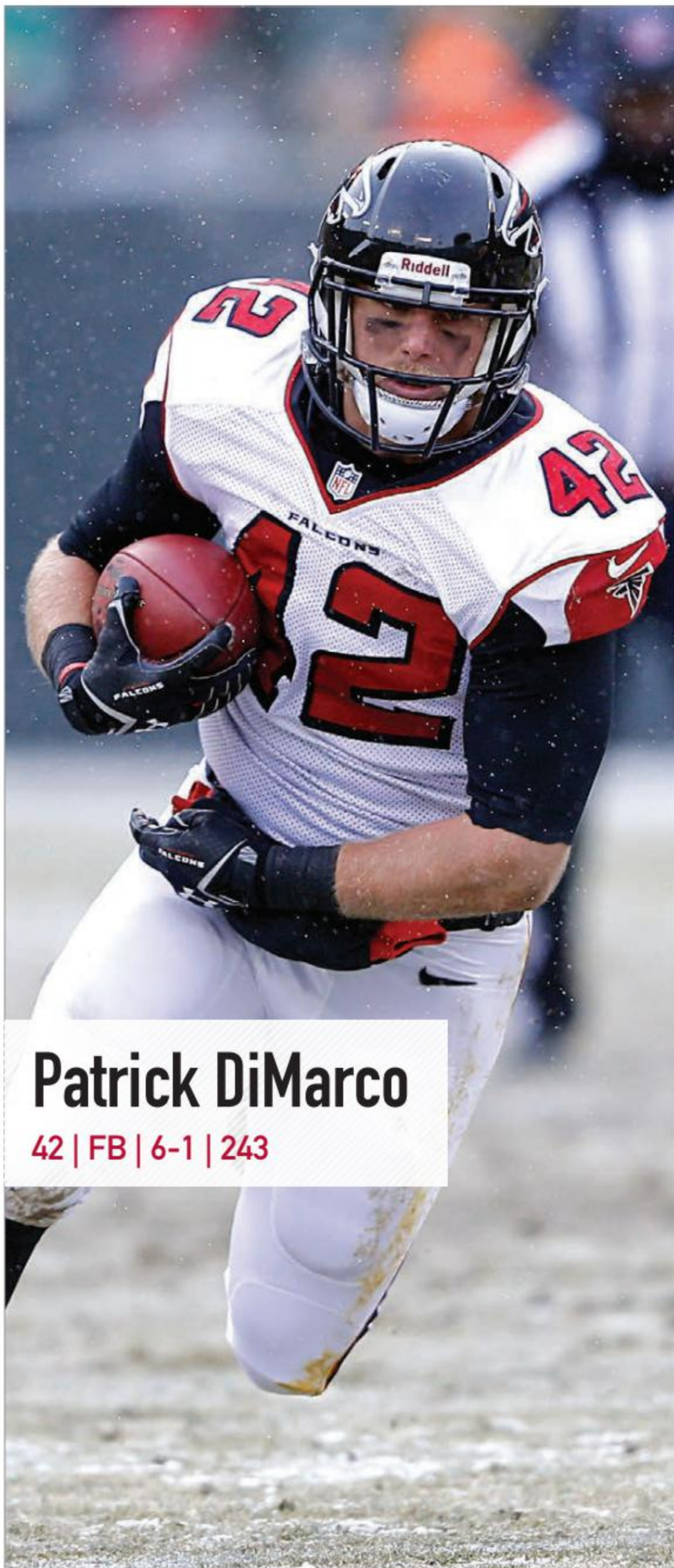
Married to Melissa Bryant and they have six children together.

Interesting Facts

Bryant kicked the game-winning 49-yard field goal against Seattle that sent the Falcons to the 2012 NFC Championship Game.

After nailing a 62-yard game-winning field goal with the Buccaneers, the Tampa Bay mayor declared Oct. 23, 2006 to be "Matt Bryant Day."

Bryant owns a 1,000-gallon custom made fish tank and his passion for marine wildlife drove him to intern with the Georgia Aquarium this offseason.



Patrick DiMarco

42 | FB | 6-1 | 243



Birthdate: 4/30/ 1989

College: South Carolina

Year: 3

Free Agent, 2013

2013 Season

Played in 14 games at fullback and on special teams.

Logged eight receptions in his first season with the Falcons.

Career

Originally signed with the San Diego Chargers as an undrafted college free agent out of South Carolina following the 2011 NFL Draft.

DiMarco played the last five games of the 2012 NFL season for the Kansas City Chiefs as the principal blocking back for runner Jamaal Charles.

DiMarco was promoted from the practice squad to become the Falcons fullback for the 2013 season.

Team captain during the 2009 season and scored the Gamecocks only touchdown in their 16-10 win over fourth-ranked Ole Miss.

Family

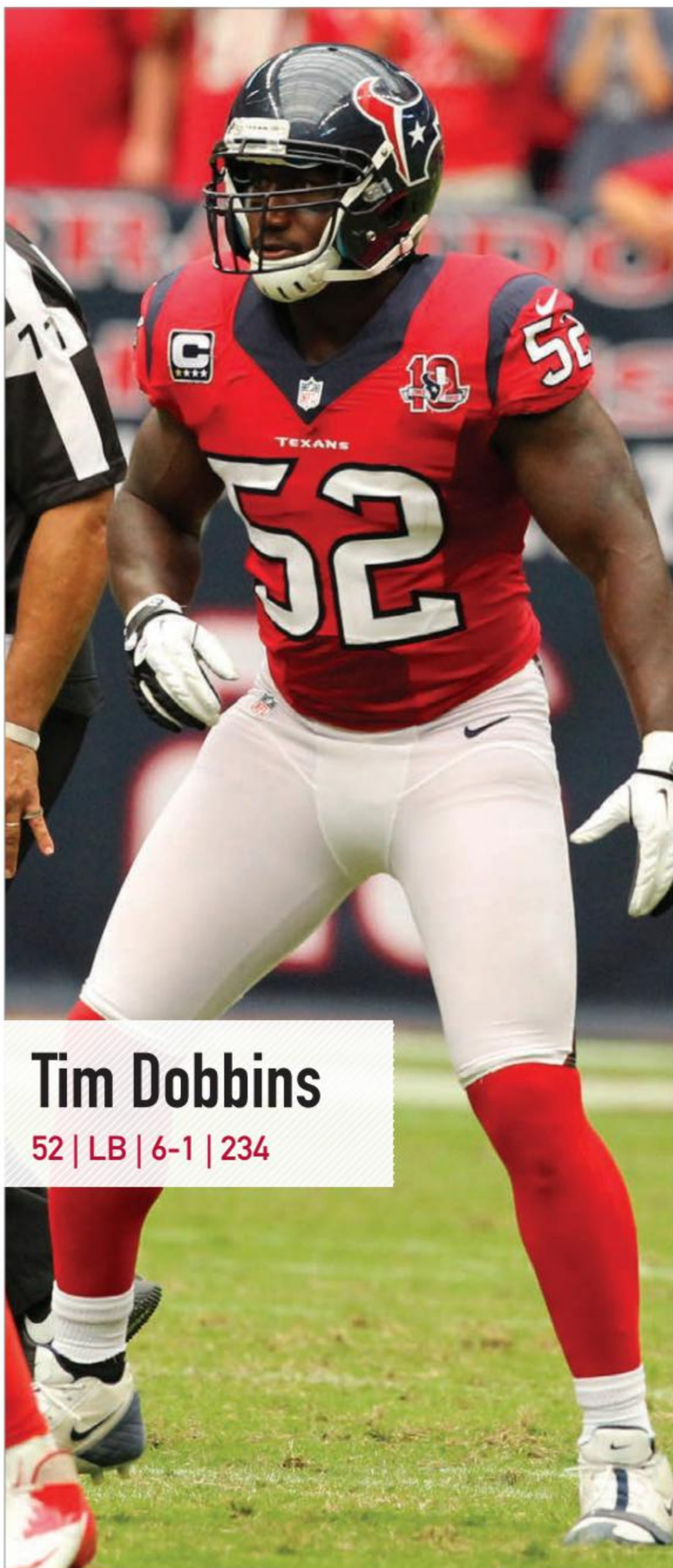
He is the nephew of PGA golfer Chris DiMarco.

Interesting Facts

Presented with the Joe Morrison Award as the team's top Offensive Player during spring practice his senior season.

Double-trained as a tight end and fullback at South Carolina to get him on the field more consistently.

Racked up 125 tackles, 29 tackles for loss and 17 sacks as a senior at Lake Brantley High School in Altamonte Springs, Fla. while scoring eight touchdowns on offense and was named *Orlando Sentinel's* Player of the Year.



Tim Dobbins

52 | LB | 6-1 | 234



Birthdate: 12/10/1982

College: Iowa State

Year: 9

Drafted 151th, 5th Round, 2006 Draft

2013 Season

Played in three games last season for the Houston Texans as a linebacker.

Career

Registered a career-high 57 tackles in 2008 with the Miami Dolphins.

Has played in 110 NFL games with 22 starts, while totaling 253 tackles (195 solo), three interceptions, two sacks and 12 passes defended.

Recovered a career-high four fumbles during his 2012 season with Houston.

Started every game he played in (24 games) for Iowa State and helped lead the Cyclones to back-to-back Bowl appearances in 2004 (Independence Bowl) and 2005 (Houston Bowl).

Notched a career-high 11 tackles and added an interception in the Chargers 37-7 Week 7 win over the Chiefs in 2009.

Earned All-Big 12 honors during his senior season at Iowa State.

Family

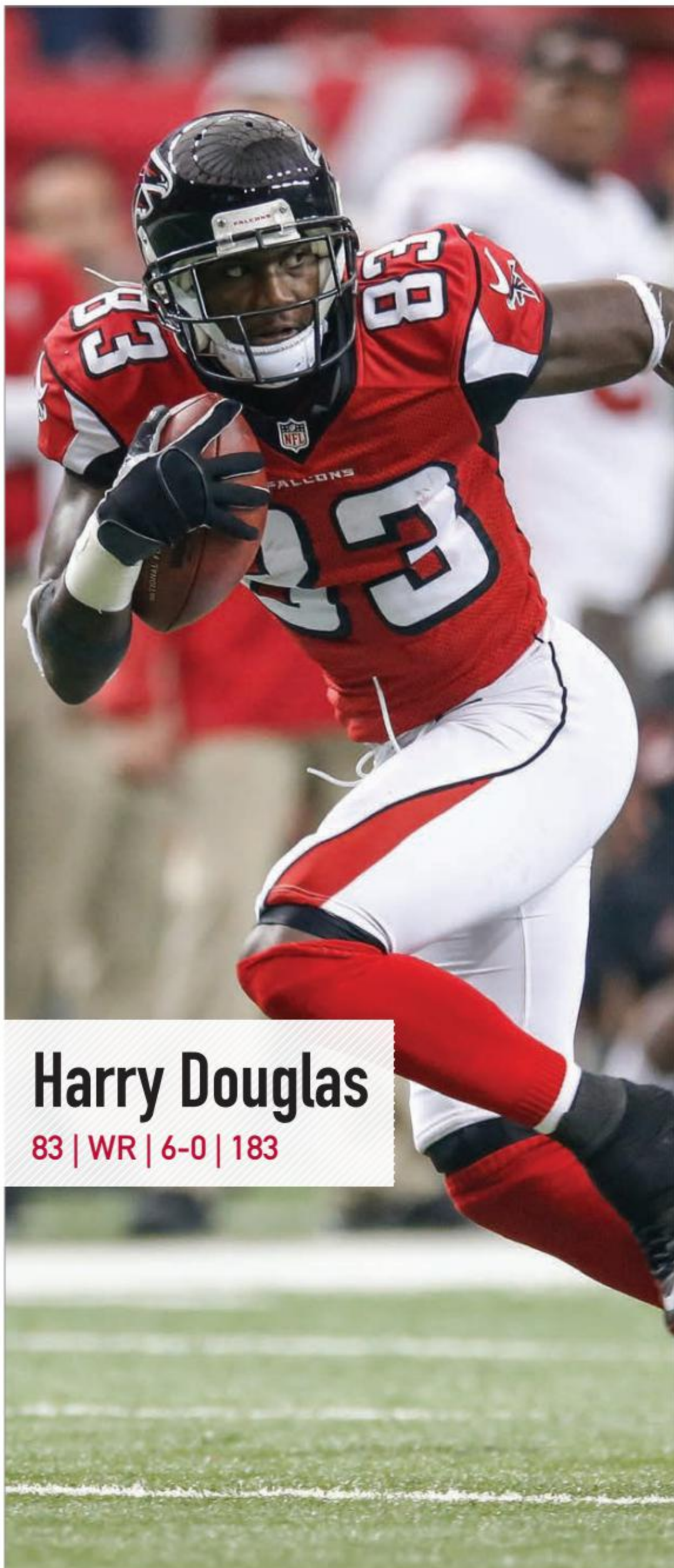
Son of Brenda Coleman.

Interesting Facts

Played for current Falcons Defensive Coordinator Mike Nolan when he was with the Miami Dolphins in 2010.

Majored in Sociology while at Iowa State.

Played in the 2002 Tennessee-Kentucky All-Star Game in Knoxville, Tenn. as a senior at Glenclyff Comprehensive High School in Nashville, Tenn.



Harry Douglas

83 | WR | 6-0 | 183



Birthdate: 9/16/1984

College: Louisville

Year: 6

Drafted 84th Pick, 3rd Round, 2008 Draft

2013 Season

Caught career-best 85 passes for 1,067 yards and two touchdowns.

Hauled in a career-high 149 receiving yards in Week 6 win over Tampa Bay and a career-high 12 receptions in Week 7 against Arizona.

Scored a career-long 80-yard touchdown Week 11 at Tampa Bay.

Career

Became the Falcons primary slot receiver with 38 passes for 395 yards in 2012.

Notched his 100th career catch against the Raiders during the 2012 season.

Contributed 22 receptions for 294 yards and one touchdown in the 2010 season.

Ranked second in Louisville's history with 2,924 receiving yards.

Family

Born to Harry and Stephanie Douglas in Tampa, Fla., and moved to Jonesboro in his early years.

His younger brother, Toney, was a guard with the Miami Heat last season.

Interesting Facts

Harry and Toney form the sixth pair of brothers in which one plays in the NFL and the other in the NBA.

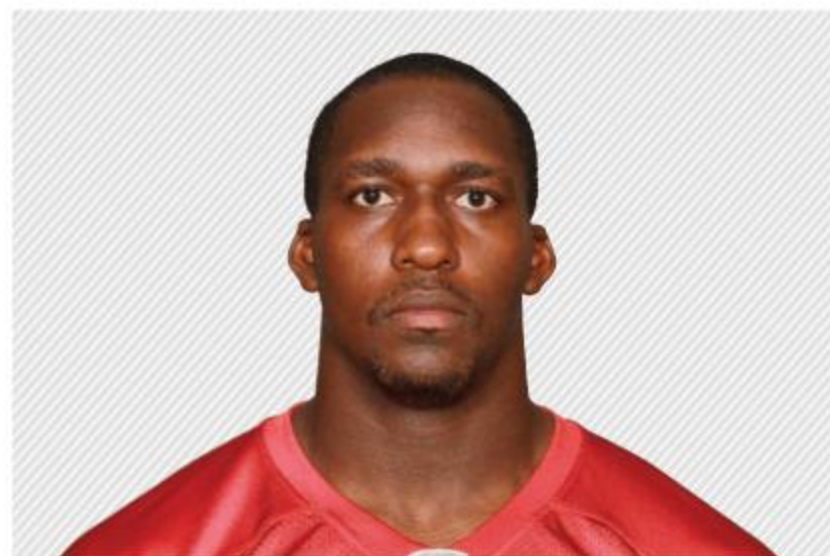
Was one of only three players who received unanimous votes for first-team all-region accolades as a prep football star.

Was an all-region selection by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* in basketball, averaging 20.5 points a game at Jonesboro High School.



Malliciah Goodman

93 | DE | 6-4 | 276



Birthdate: 1/4/1990

College: Clemson

Year: 2

Drafted 127th Pick, 4th Round, 2013 Draft

2013 Season

Recorded a pair of tackles in Atlanta's 34-31 road win over Buffalo and a 31-23 home win over Tampa Bay.

Career

Finished his collegiate career with 150 tackles, 21.5 tackles for a loss, 12 quarterback sacks, 35 quarterback pressures, three pass breakups, eight forced fumbles and one recovered fumble.

He played in 54 games including 28 starts and took 2,061 snaps over his 4 years.

Tied for second in Clemson Tigers team history in games played and tied for third in forced fumbles.

Accepted a scholarship offer from Clemson University over offers from South Carolina, Maryland, Tennessee and Virginia.

Interesting Facts

His hands, which measure an astounding 11.5 inches from fingertip to fingertip, were featured in ESPN The Magazine in 2009.

In his senior season of high school, Goodman had 73 tackles, 27 tackles for loss, 15 sacks in nine games.

Participated in the 2009 U.S. Army All-American Bowl in San Antonio, Texas.

Right out of high school, Goodman was rated a four-star recruit by Rivals.com and was rated the second best strong-side defensive end in the nation.



Ra'Shede Hageman

77 | DE | 6-6 | 318



Birthdate: 9/8/1990

College: Minnesota

Year: Rookie

Drafted 37th Pick, 2nd Round, 2014 Draft

2013 Season

Named first-team All-Big Ten during his senior season at Minnesota.

Received the Gophers' Bronko Nagurski Award, which is given annually to the team's most valuable player.

Recorded 13 tackles for loss, two sacks, one interception and eight passes defended his senior season at Minnesota.

Finished collegiate career with 91 total tackles, 24 tackles for loss, 10 sacks and 10 passes defended in 34 games.

Family

He and his brother Xavier were adopted by Eric Hageman and Jill Coyle in 1998 and are the oldest of five children in the Hageman family.

He grew up in Minneapolis, Minn. and attended Washburn High School.

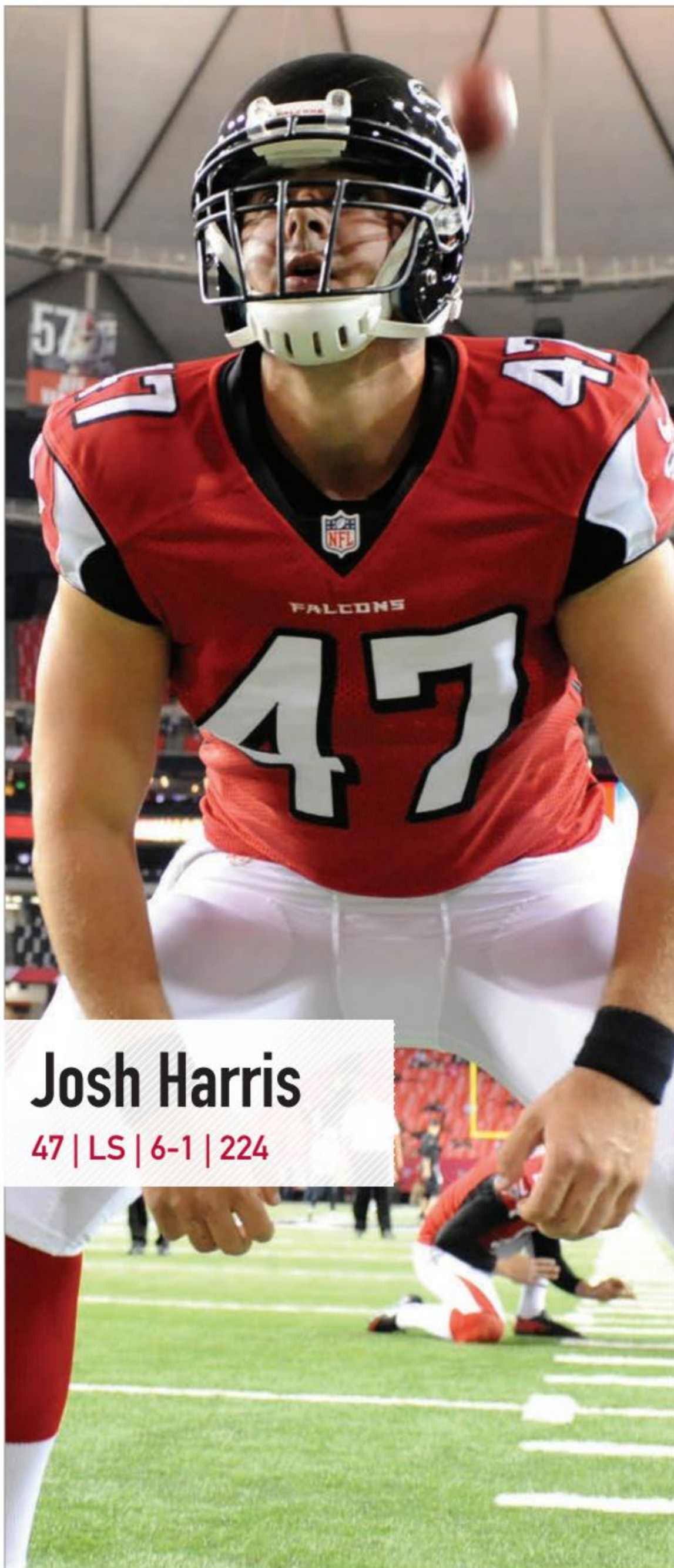
Hageman's son, Zion, was born in 2011.

Interesting Facts

Hageman entered the University of Minnesota as a tight end and redshirted the 2009 season to switch to the defensive line.

He was considered one of the top tight end prospects in the country in high school and hauled in 23 touchdown passes his last two prep seasons before playing in the 2008 Under Armour All-America Game.

Hageman posted a 35.5 inch vertical at the 2014 NFL Combine and 32 bench reps with 225 pounds.



Josh Harris

47 | LS | 6-1 | 224



Birthdate: 4/27/1989

College: Auburn

Year: 3

Undrafted Free Agent in 2012

2013 Season

Recorded two assists on special teams.

Snapped to Matt Bryant, who made all 39 extra points he attempted and connected on 24 field goals.

Career

Long snapper for all three game-winning field goals in 2012, including Matt Bryant's last second thrilling game winning field goal against Seattle in the 2012 postseason.

Snapped for Bryant who made 33 of 38 field goal attempts in 2012, including all four of his attempts of 50 yards or longer.

Started as long snapper for all 16 games during his rookie season.

Made his NFL debut in the Week 1 win against the Kansas City Chiefs in 2012.

Snapped the last-second, game-winning field goal in Auburn's 22-19 win over Oregon in the 2010 BCS National Championship game.

Family

Josh is the son of Lori and John Harris.

Interesting Facts

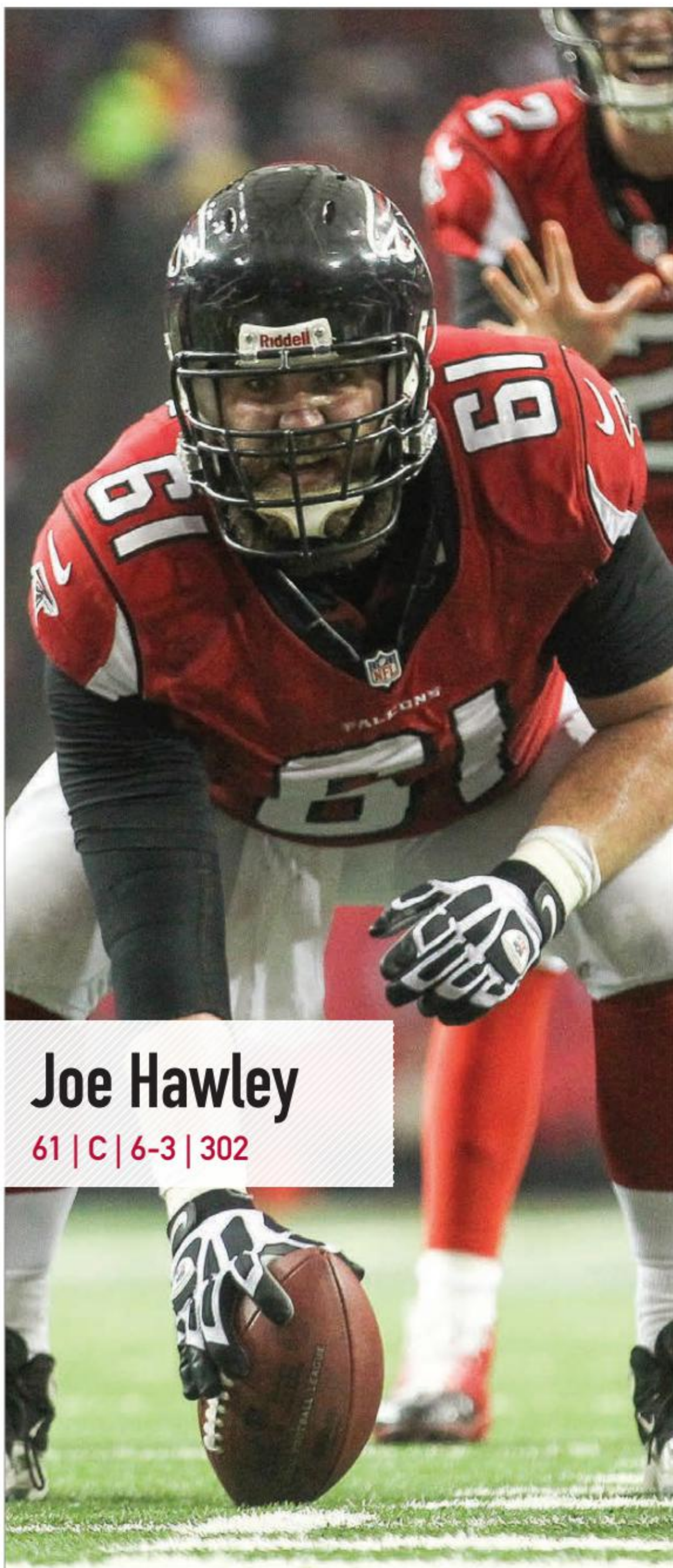
Josh is a native of Georgia and attended Carrollton High School.

Named the National Sigma Nu Athlete of the Year in 2011.

SEC Academic Honor Roll selection in 2008 and 2009.

Was a tri-athlete in high school, playing football, baseball and wrestling.

Josh's grandfather played on Auburn's 1957 National Championship team.



Joe Hawley

61 | C | 6-3 | 302



Birthdate: 10/22/1988

College: Nevada-Las Vegas

Year: 5

Drafted 117th Pick, 4th Round, 2010

2013 Season

Played in 16 games and started seven times at center towards the end of the season.

Finished the 2013 as a top-20 run blocking center by Pro Football Focus.

Career

Saw his first action in 2012 in Atlanta's Week 4 win over Carolina, helping the offensive post 121 rushing yards and a 6.4 yards per carry average.

In 2011, he started his first career game at center in place of injured veteran Todd McClure against Chicago.

Played in six games as a reserve offensive lineman and special teams performer in 2012.

Competed in 47 career games with 33 starts at UNLV as a center and right guard.

Family

He was born in Bakersfield, Calif., and is the son of Scott and Kelly Hawley.

He has an older brother, Jeff, and two sisters, Ashleigh and Lexi.

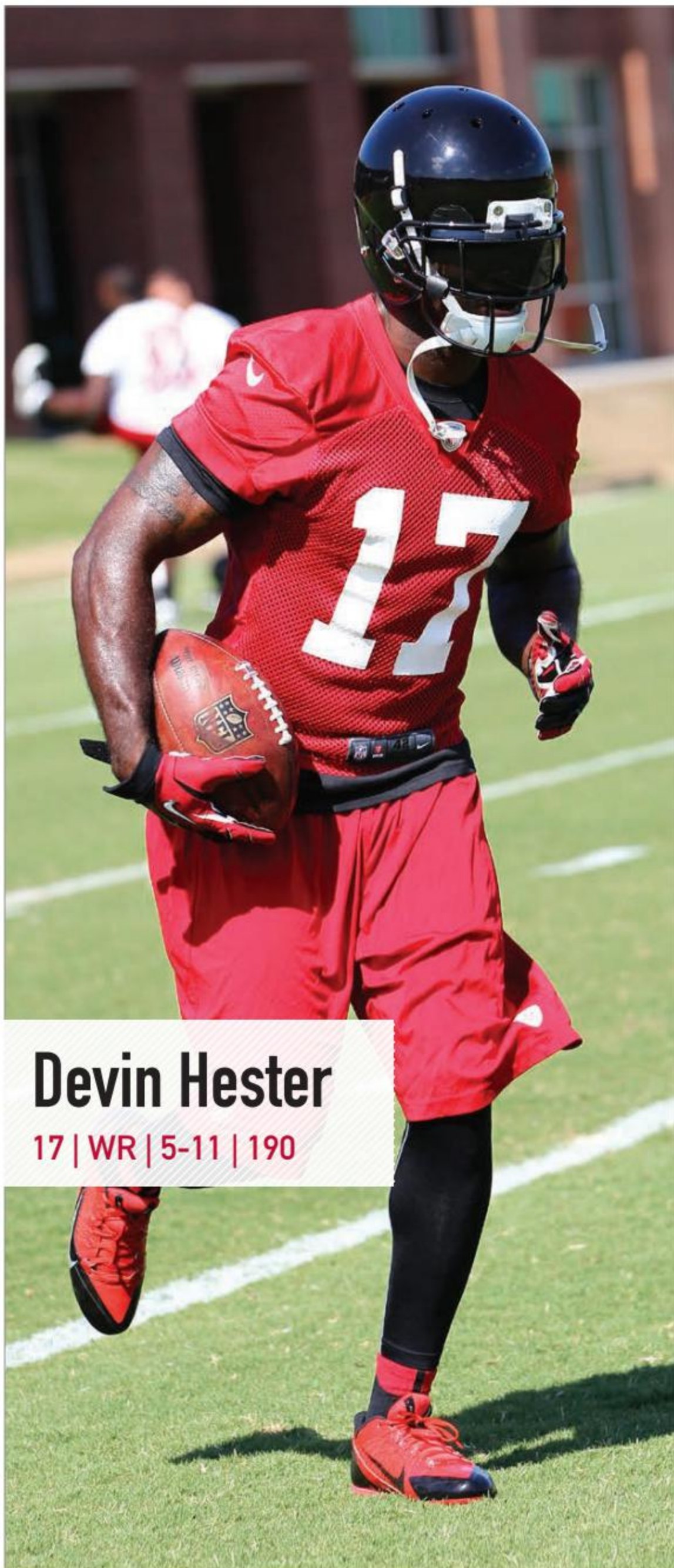
Interesting Facts

Won the Rebel Spirit Award at UNLV for the senior, who showed toughness, positive attitude and strong commitment to his teammates.

Did not give up a sack in his senior year at UNLV.

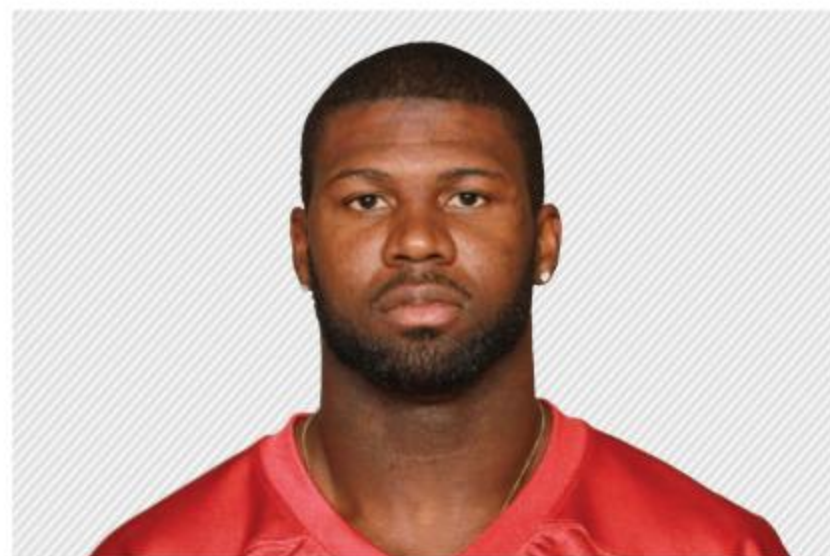
Awarded Male Athlete of the Year as a senior and MVP of his high school football team.

Threw discus for the Esperanza High School track team.



Devin Hester

17 | WR | 5-11 | 190



Birthdate: 11/4/1982

College: University of Miami

Year: 9

Free Agent 2014

2013 Season

Broke Chicago record for most kickoff return yards in a game with 249.

In last season's game against the Washington Redskins, Hester returned an 81-yard punt for a touchdown for his 19th career touchdown return, tying Deion Sanders' all-time record.

Career

Hester is the leader in career punt returns with 264 and punt return yards with 3,241.

Surpassed Glyn Milburn for the most all-time kickoff return yards in franchise history with 4,643 yards.

Three-time Pro-Bowler (2006, 2007, 2010) and four-time All-Pro (2006, 2007, 2010, 2011).

Family

Hester was born in Riviera Beach, Fla. to Gualapula Brown Johnson and Lenorris Hester, Sr.

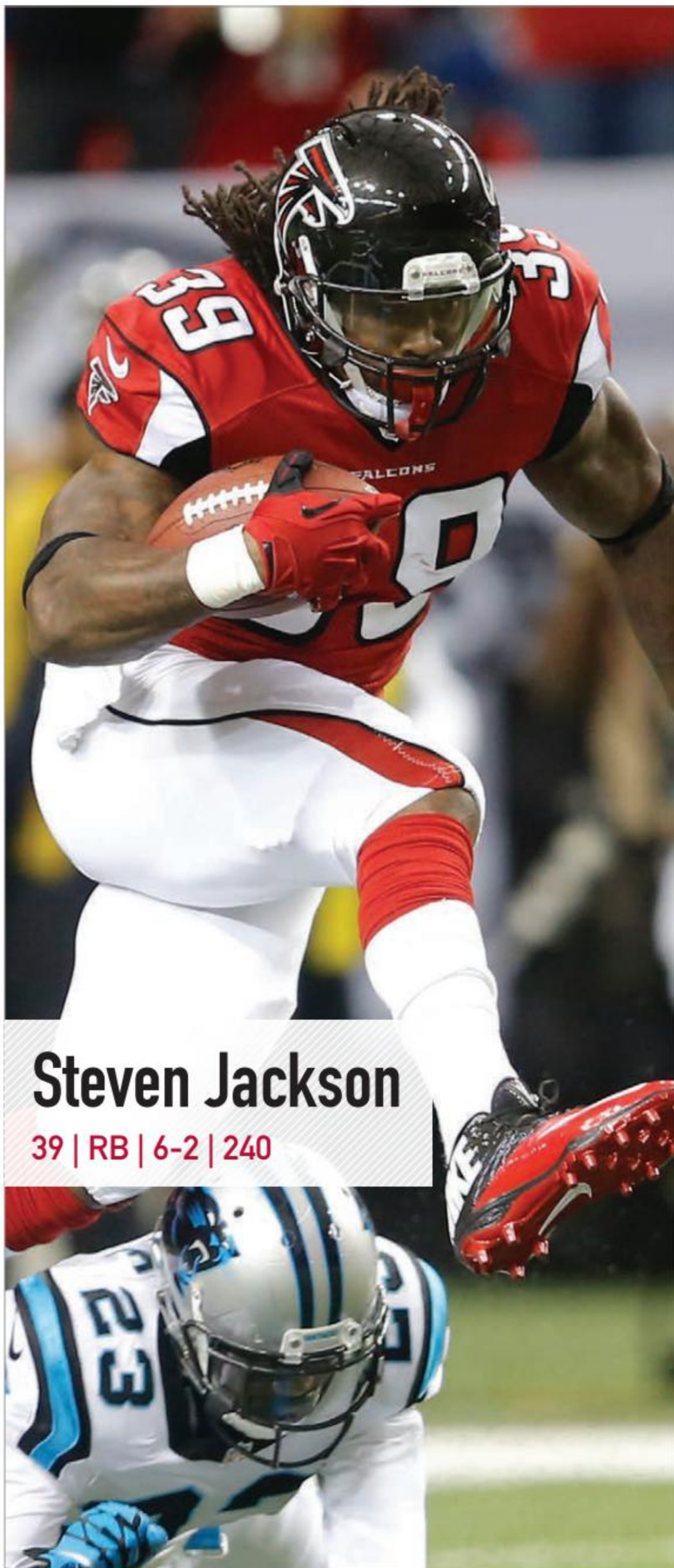
Interesting Facts

Was a standout track and field athlete at Riviera Beach High School, receiving All-American accolades in the long jump.

Earned the name "Sugar Foot" after he returned a kick for an 80-yard touchdown in the 2002 CaliFlorida Bowl.

First player on the University of Miami football team to play all three phases-offense, defense, special teams.

At the University of Miami, he was known as "Hurricane Hester" by fans and teammates.



Steven Jackson

39 | RB | 6-2 | 240



Birthdate: 7/22/1983

College: Oregon State

Year: 11

Free Agent, 2013

2013 Season

Rushed an average of 72.3 yards per game and scored three touchdowns.

Career

Holds the St. Louis Rams all-time rushing record with 10,135 yards in nine seasons.

He is the 27th running back in NFL history to rush for over 10,000 yards, his personal best season coming in 2006 with 1,528 yards.

His 4,545 all-purpose yards at Oregon State rank second all-time despite leaving after his junior year.

Three-time Pro Bowler (2006, 2009, 2010) and two-time All-Pro (2006, 2009).

Family

Born in Las Vegas, Nev., and is the son of Steve and Brenda Jackson.

Has an older brother, Ryan Smith, and two sisters, Rhonda Pullens and Yolanda Jackson.

Interesting facts

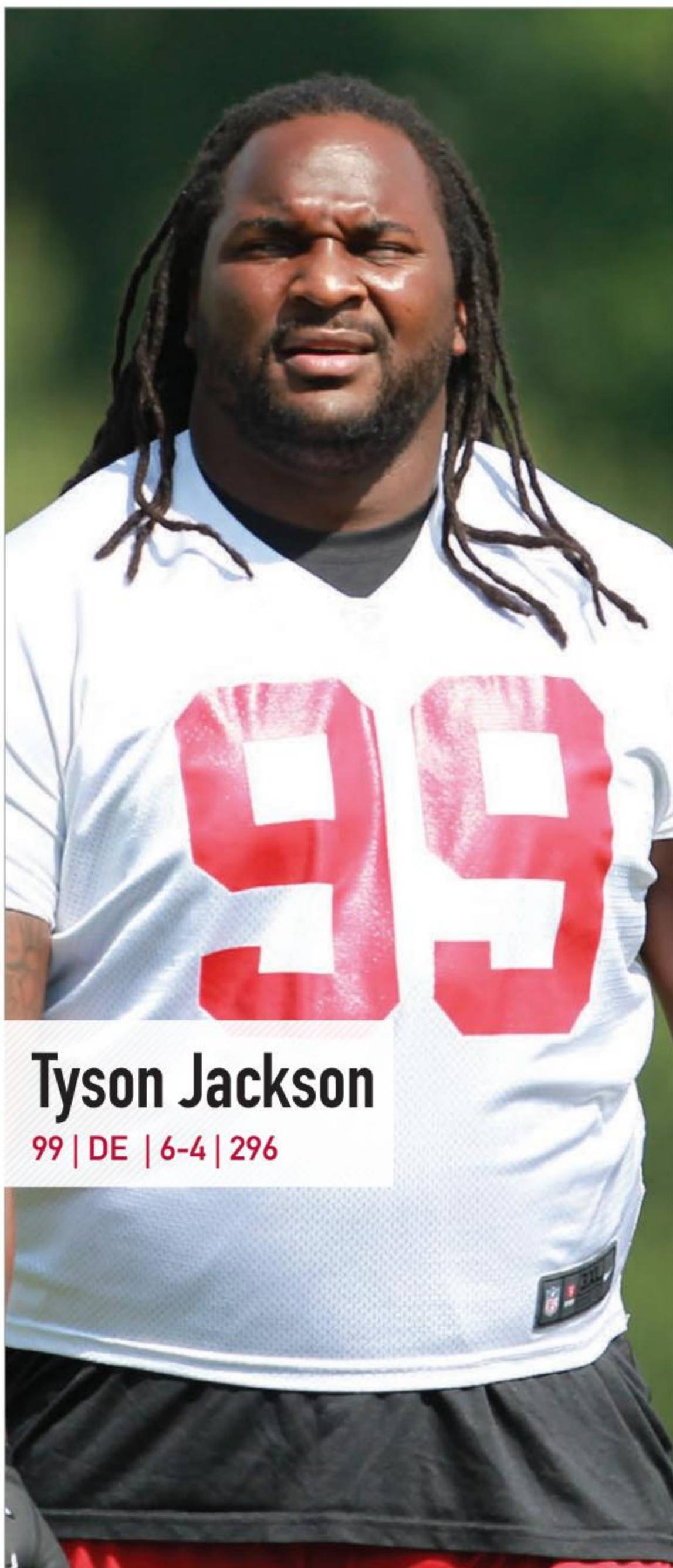
Sunrise Regional MVP while he attended Eldorado High School.

Jackson wears No. 39 because it is the number of books in the Old Testament of the Bible.

July 18, 2014 was the opening of Looking Forward Running Back, an art show of Jackson's at Hamilton-Selway Fine Art in Los Angeles.

Has his own website called sj39.com.

Rushed for 6,396 yards and 81 touchdowns during his high school career.



Tyson Jackson

99 | DE | 6-4 | 296



Birthdate: 6/6/1986

College: Louisiana State University

Year: 6

Free Agent, 2014

2013 Season

Helped the Chiefs allow only 19.1 points per game, making their defense one of the top scoring defenses in the NFL.

Recorded 33 tackles and a career high of four sacks, three passes defended and three quarterback pressures.

Career

Jackson has appeared in 74 games with 55 starts and tallied 190 tackles with the Chiefs.

Played in all 16 games of his rookie season with the Kansas City Chiefs and had 38 tackles (27 solo) with two pass deflections.

Ranked second in the NCAA among defensive linemen, with 10 pass break-ups.

Second-team All-SEC selection at LSU.

Selected to freshman All-SEC team by the league's coaches and the Sporting News as a redshirt freshmen in 2005.

Selected to the second-team All-SEC (2006, 2008).

Family

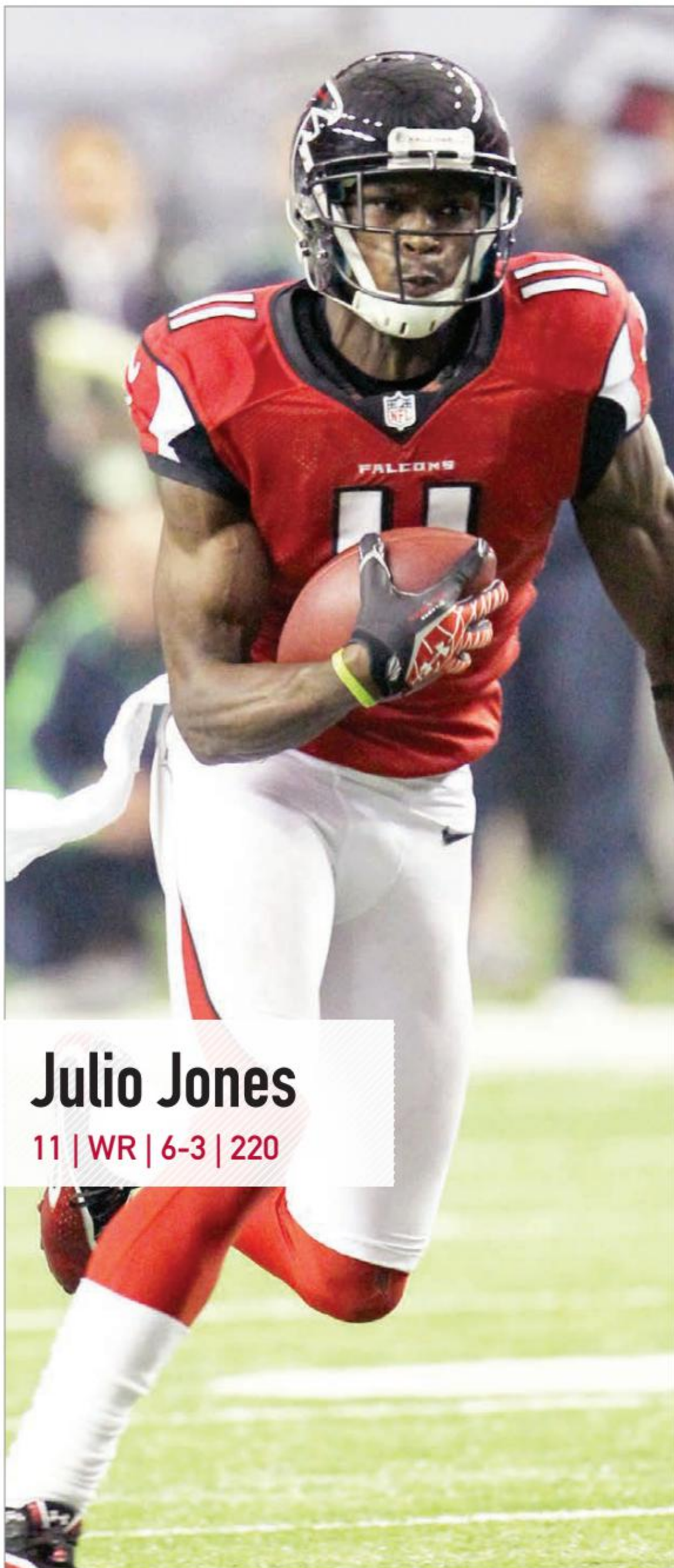
Native of Edgard, La., where he donated equipment and uniforms for little league teams in the area.

Helped start a social etiquette class taught in a local elementary school.

Interesting Facts

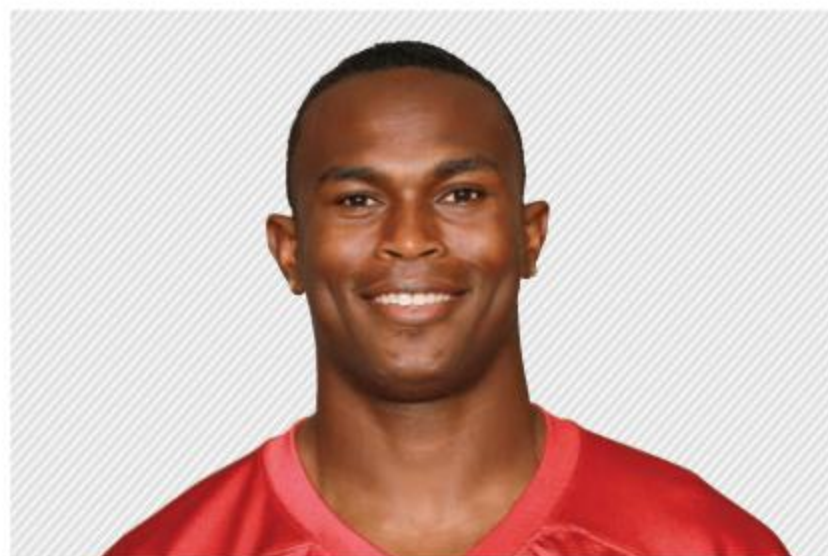
Member of the West St. John High School State Championship football team in 2003 and 2004.

All-District and All-Parish while attending West St. John.



Julio Jones

11 | WR | 6-3 | 220



Birthdate: 2/3/1989

College: Alabama

Year: 4

Drafted 6th Pick, 1st Round, 2011 Draft

2013 Season

Started five games and was placed on injured reserve on Oct. 10, 2013 after suffering foot injury.

Leading the entire NFL in catches and receiving yards at the time of his injury.

Career

Posted four 100-yard games and two multi-touchdown games in 2012.

Became the sixth Falcons receiver to post 100-plus receiving yards in a postseason game.

Tied Roddy White's postseason catch record with 11 in 2012.

Had the first 100-yard playoff game by a Falcon since the 1998 NFC Championship Game.

Named to his first Pro Bowl in 2012.

In his sophomore season with Alabama, the Tide went undefeated 14-0 season including a victory in the 2010 BCS National Championship.

Set an Alabama record his junior season with 78 catches and 1,133 yards.

First true freshman receiver to start in a season opener at Alabama.

Family

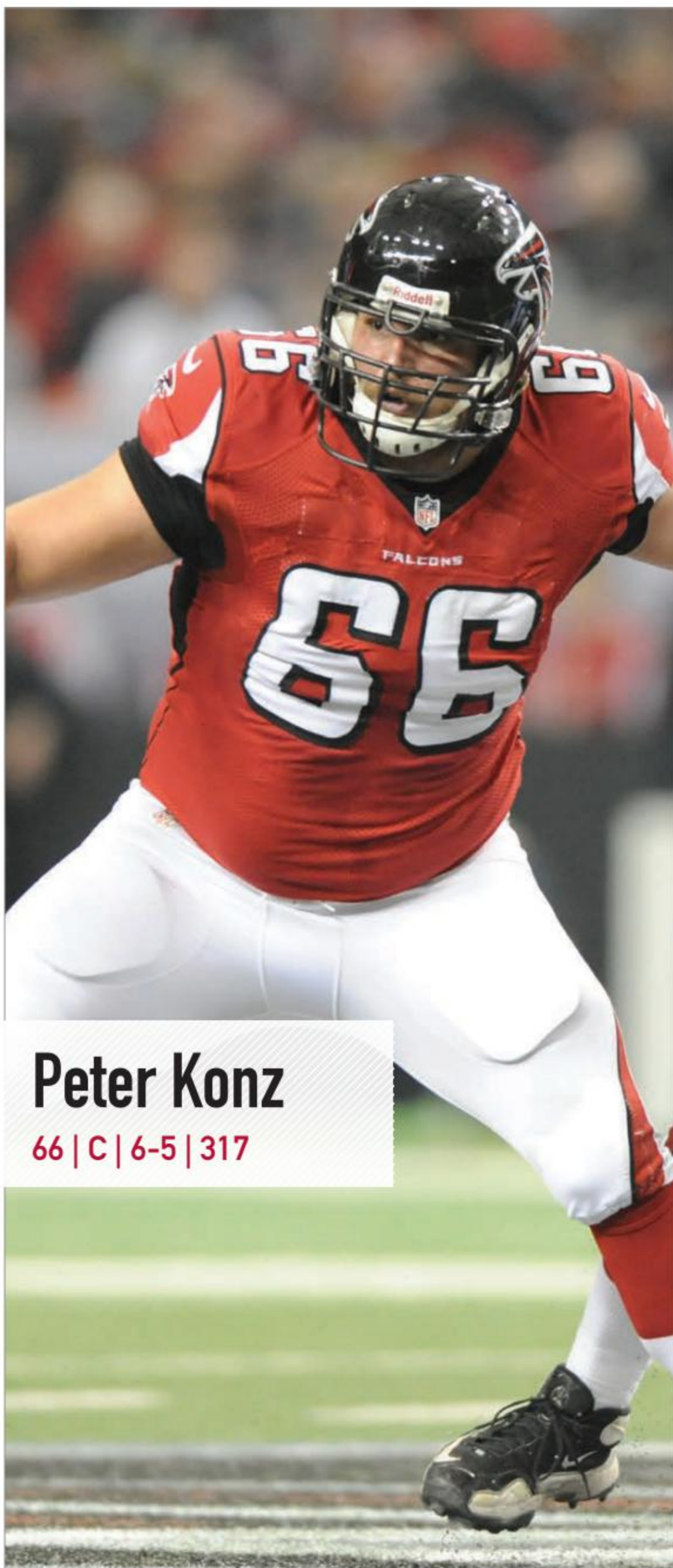
Born Quintorris Lopez "Julio" Jones to Queen Marvin.

Interesting Facts

In 2012, Jones cut and donated his hair to a charity that helps children with cancer in 2012.

His nickname in high school was "Waffle House" because he was always open.

Wears the No. 11 in recognition of the year he was drafted into the NFL.



Peter Konz

66 | C | 6-5 | 317



Birthdate: 12/20/89

College: Wisconsin

Year: 3

Drafted 55th Pick, 2nd Round, 2012 Draft

2013 Season

Started in 15 games and saw action in all 16 games at center and guard.

Moved to center replacing Todd McClure after his retirement to begin season.

Career

As a rookie, Konz was on an offensive line that racked up 5,906 total net yards, the second highest single-season total in Falcons history.

During his rookie season in 2012, Konz started 10 games at right guard and saw action in all 16 games.

Konz was backup center behind Falcons veteran Todd McClure in 2012.

Konz was named second-team All-American by Yahoo Sports for his play during the 2011 season.

In 2011, he helped Monte Ball lead the nation with 1,923 rushing yards and tie Barry Sanders with an NCAA record 39 rushing touchdowns.

He anchored a Wisconsin offensive line that paved the way for one of the most prolific offenses in the country, averaging 469.9 yards per game.

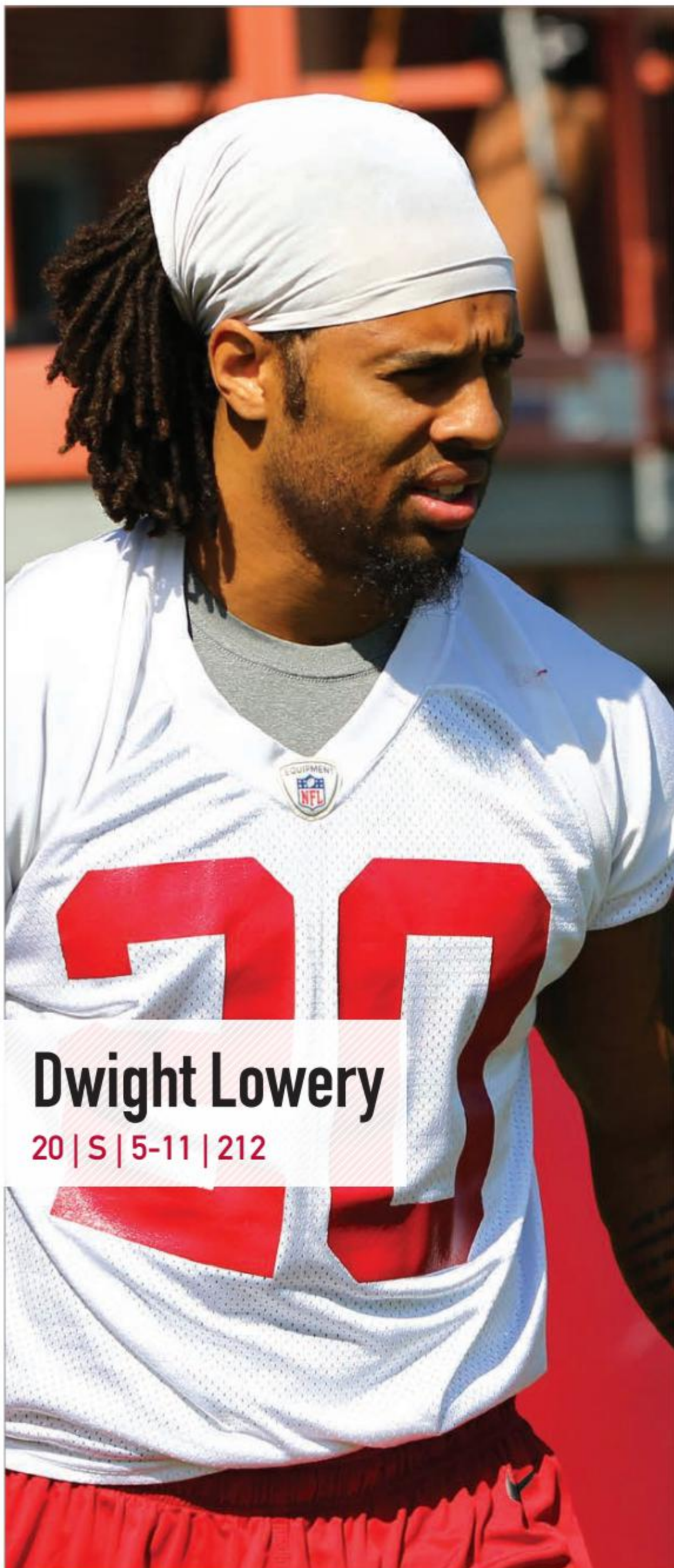
Family

Attended Neenah High School in Wisconsin and is the son of Margaret and Tony Konz.

Interesting Facts

Rated as the top center available in the 2012 NFL Draft.

Sports Illustrated described Konz as a "tough, nasty center with an all-around game."



Dwight Lowery

20 | S | 5-11 | 212



Birthdate: 1/23/1986

College: San Jose State

Year: 7

Free Agent, 2014

2013 Season

Lowery started three games with the Jaguars and posted six tackles with one fumble recovery before going on injured reserve.

Career

Has intercepted 10 career NFL passes, which includes two interception returns for touchdowns during his 2010 season with the Jets.

Two-time All-American selection as a cornerback at San Jose State.

Deflected a career-high 16 passes and forced a career-best five fumbles in 2008.

Drafted in 2008 by the New York Jets in the fourth round.

Lowery scored his first career touchdown in 2010 while intercepting a pass thrown by Brett Favre and taking it in for the game-winning score over the Vikings.

Family

Married to Ashley Lowery.

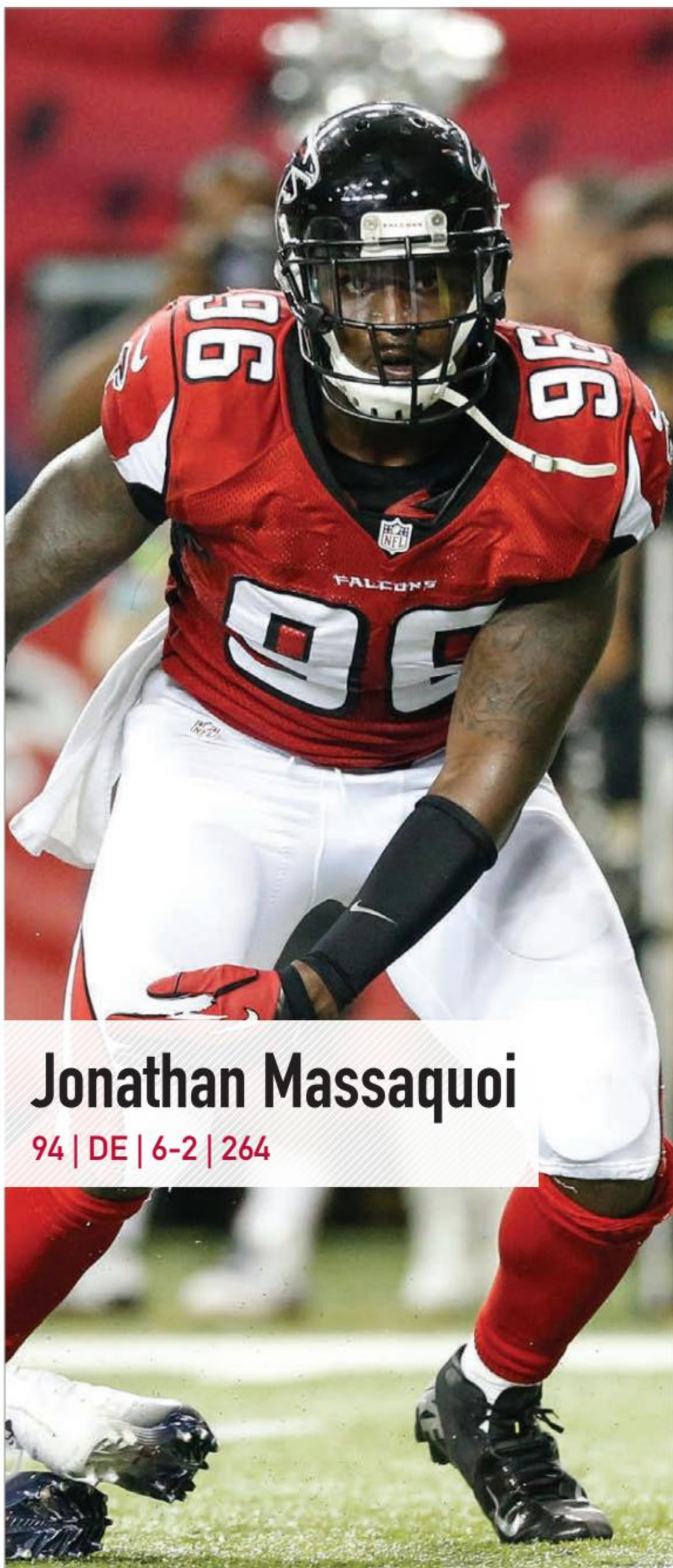
Was born in Santa Cruz, Calif. and raised by mother Tracy Rivers.

Is one of seven children.

Interesting Facts

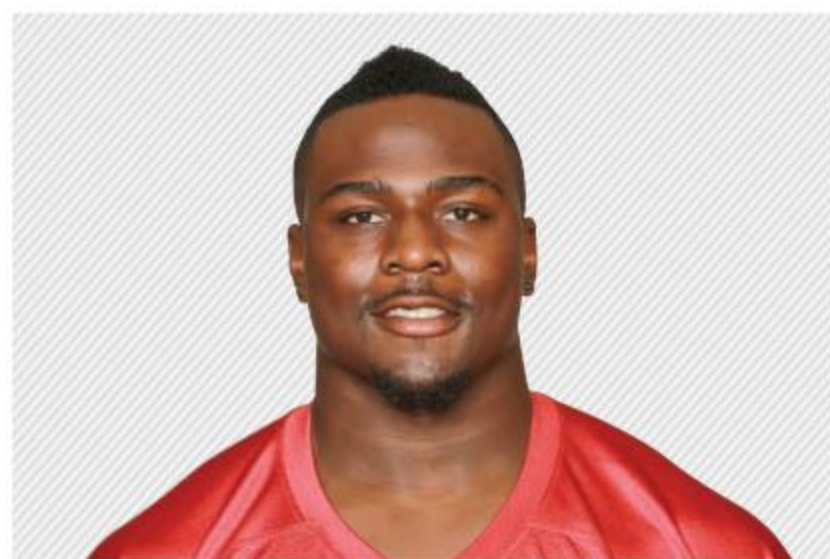
Lowery was a running back and defensive back at Soquel High School in California and broke the county scoring record his senior season with 25 touchdowns and also managed to pick off 20 passes in his final two varsity seasons.

As a junior at San Jose State, Lowery led the nation with nine interceptions.



Jonathan Massaquoi

94 | DE | 6-2 | 264



Birthdate: 5/18/1988

College: Troy

Year: 3

Drafted 164th Pick, 5th Round, 2012 Draft

2013 Season

Started in four of 16 games for the Falcons recording 43 total tackles (29 solo), four sacks and one pass deflection.

Had a season-high eight tackles (six solo) in a 34-31 win against the Buffalo Bills in Week 13.

Career

Played in eight games primarily on special teams and as a reserve defensive lineman during his rookie season.

Saw action on the defensive side of the ball and special teams in the NFC Divisional playoff game against Seattle in the 2012 season.

Also played on special teams in the 2012 NFC Championship Game against San Francisco.

First-team All-Sun Belt in 2010.

Finished with 128 tackles and 19.5 sacks in his two years at Troy.

Family

Was born in Monrovia, Liberia.

Has two cousins, Mohamed Massaquoi (Jacksonville) and Visanthe Shiancoe (Baltimore) in the League.

Interesting Facts

Regarded as one of the best linebacker prospects in the 2012 NFL Draft before switching to defensive end.

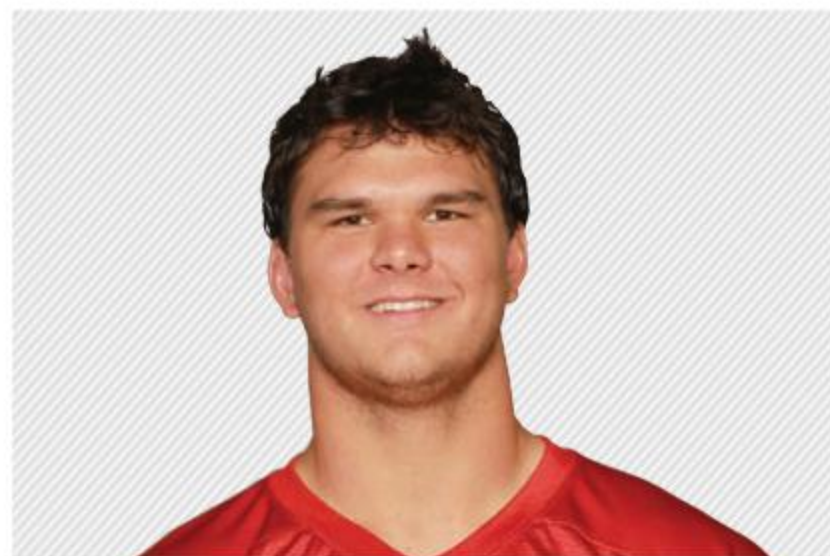
Attended Butler Community College before transferring to Troy after his freshman year.

Played high school football at Central Gwinnett High School in Lawrenceville, Ga.



Jake Matthews

70 | T | 6-5 | 309



Birthdate: 2/11/1992

College: Texas A&M

Pro Experience: 3 years

Drafted 6th Pick, 1st Round, 2014 Draft

Career

First-team All-SEC (2012, 2013) and also received first-team All-American honors by the Football Writers Association of America (2012).

Named ESPN.com's All-Big 12 Freshman team and earned honorable mention for All-Big 12 conference (2010).

Cornerstone of the Aggies' offensive front that allowed just nine sacks in 13 games and set school records for total offense (490.2 yards), passing (291.1 yards) and scoring offense (39.1 points) per game.

Family

His father, Bruce, was inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame in 2007 after an illustrious 19-year career with the Houston Oilers and Tennessee Titans.

Older brother, Kevin, was a two-year starter and center for Texas A&M (2008-09) and his younger brother, Mike, is a current Aggie.

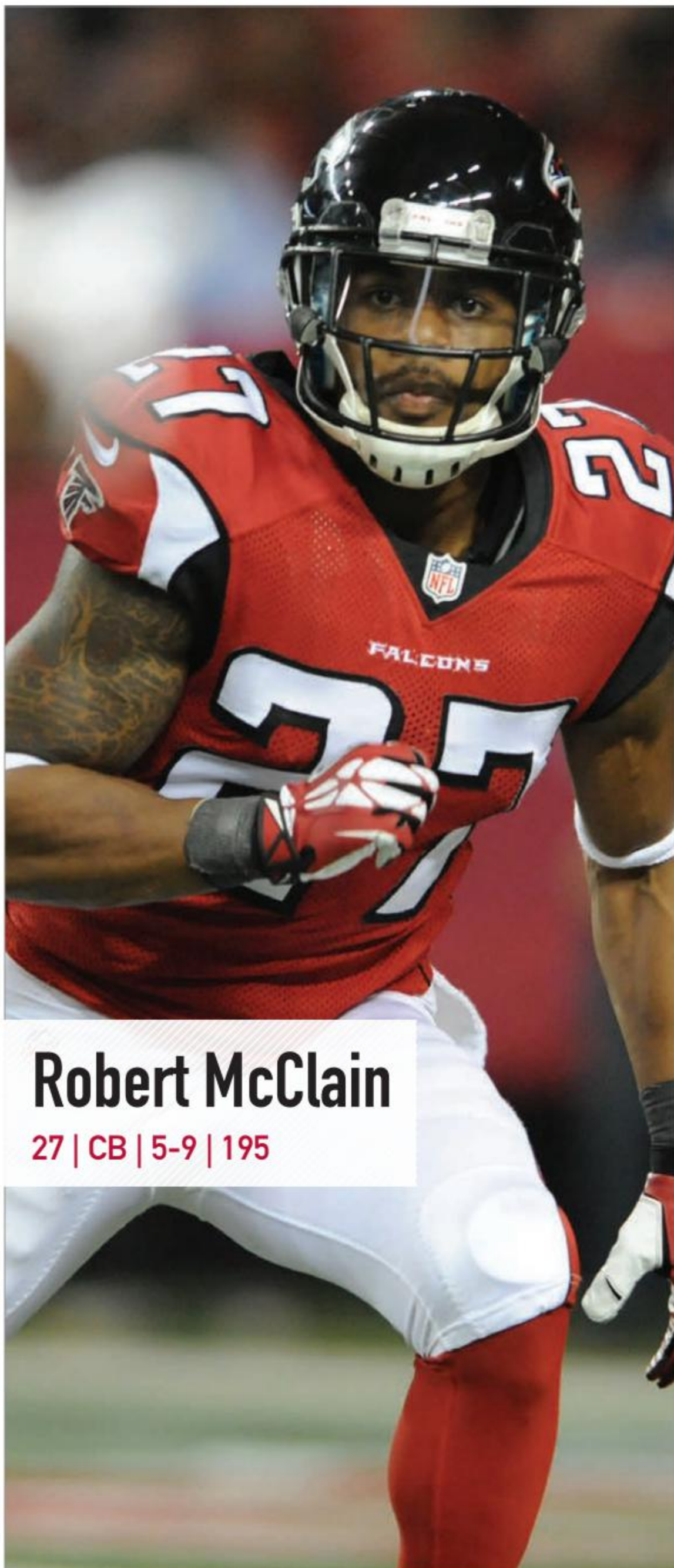
Has two cousins in the NFL, Packers linebacker Clay Matthews III and Eagles linebacker Casey Matthews.

His uncle, Clay, played for the Falcons from 1994-96.

Interesting Facts

Protected the blindside of current Cleveland Browns quarterback Johnny Manziel, who threw for more than 4,000 yards in 2013.

Played in the 2010 U.S. Army All-American Bowl and also earned 2009 High School All-American honors by *USA Today*.



Robert McClain

27 | CB | 5-9 | 195



Birthdate: 7/22/1988

College: Connecticut

Year: 5

Free Agent, 2012

2013 Season

Saw action in all 16 games, starting six of them for the Falcons.

Had 65 total tackles, 57 solo tackles, six passes defended, two forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries.

Career

Has totaled 145 tackles (125 solo) and one interception, which he returned for 32 yards.

Contributed as nickel back throughout the 2012 season.

In his first career collegiate start, he returned an interception 37 yards for a touchdown in the third quarter (against Syracuse).

Selected as All-Big East second-team by coaches and first-team Big East as a punt returner by media.

Received the Brian Kozlowski Award for his courage, hard work and productivity at Connecticut.

Recorded his first career interception when he picked off Broncos QB Peyton Manning in 2012.

Family

Born as Robert "Reggie" McClain in Philadelphia, Pa.

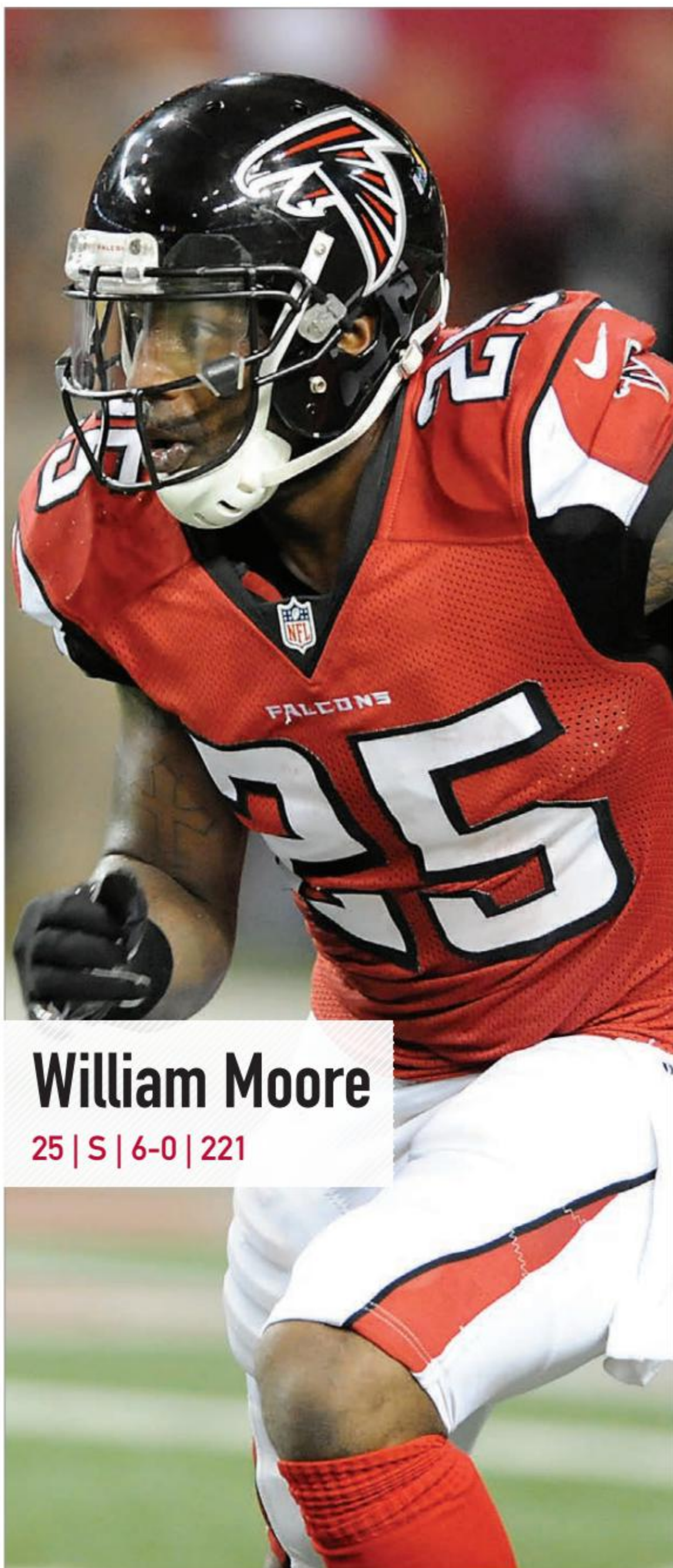
Attended Patuxent High School in Lusby, Md.

Interesting Facts

An All-State selection in Maryland and was named first-team All-Metro by the *Washington Post*.

In high school, McClain returned a punt 98 yards for a touchdown, intercepted six passes, broke up 19 others and made 53 tackles his senior season.

Also, during his senior season, McClain rushed for 1,105 yards and 12 touchdowns, caught 25 passes for 421 yards and four touchdowns and returned five kickoffs for touchdowns.



William Moore

25 | S | 6-0 | 221



Birthdate: 5/18/1985

College: Missouri

Year: 6

Drafted 55th Pick, 2nd Round, 2009 Draft

2013 Season

Started every game at strong safety.

Finished the season with 127 tackles (83 solo), eight passes defended, three interceptions, two sacks and three forced fumbles.

Named State Farm Player of the Week after finishing with five tackles, an interception and a fumble recovery against the Redskins.

Career

Earned his first Pro Bowl selection after posting 105 tackles (74 solo) with eight passes defended, four interceptions, four tackles for loss and one sack (2012).

Awarded the 2012 NFC Player of the Week honors after recording his first career multi-interception game off QB Drew Brees against New Orleans.

Has started 54 games in five seasons and has made 289 total tackles.

Family

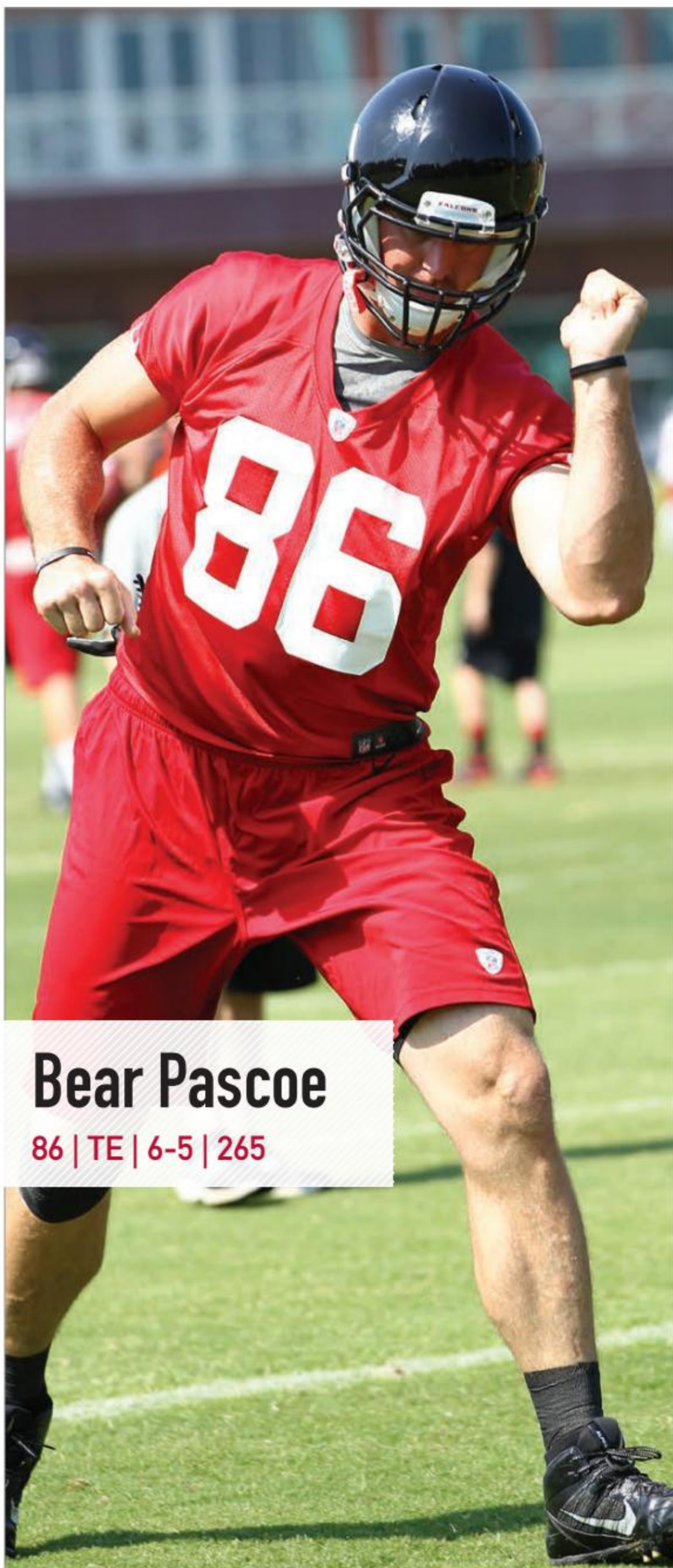
Son of William Shaw and Marilyn Moore in Hayti, Mo.

Interesting Facts

Wears No. 25 in memory of his college teammate, Aaron O'Neal, who died in 2005.

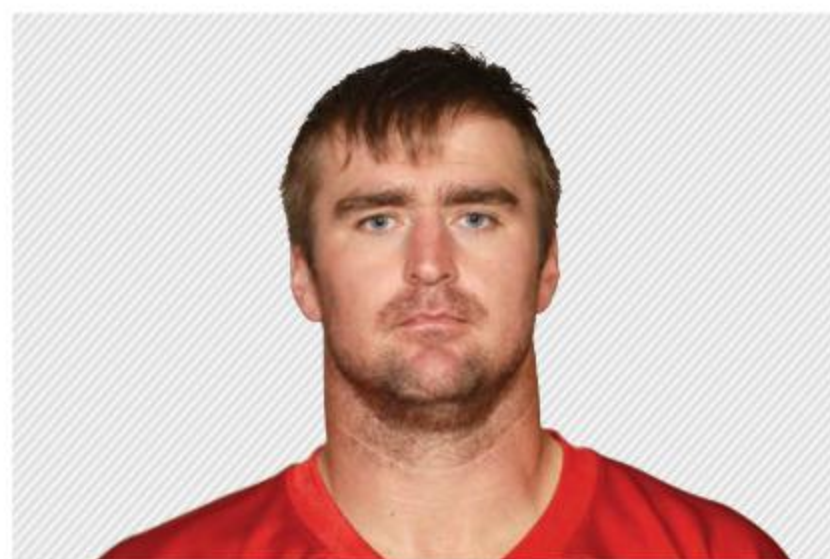
At Missouri, Moore was awarded the 2007 Team Hammer Award Winner for the Most Big Hits.

Finished his high school career with a school-record 74 receptions for 1,768 yards and 34 touchdowns.



Bear Pascoe

86 | TE | 6-5 | 265



Birthdate: 2/23/1986

College: Fresno State

Year: 6

Free Agent, 2014

2013 Season

Caught 12 passes for 81 yards last season for the New York Giants.

Averaged 6.8 yards per catch with a long of 14 yards.

Career

Has played in 66 career games with 32 starts recording 38 receptions for 338 yards with one touchdown.

Pascoe's first career touchdown came in the 2011 NFC Championship Game against the San Francisco 49ers.

Family

Born and raised in Porterville, Calif. and is the son of Sean and Julie Pascoe.

His younger cousin, Vince Pascoe, also played tight end for Fresno State.

Interesting Facts

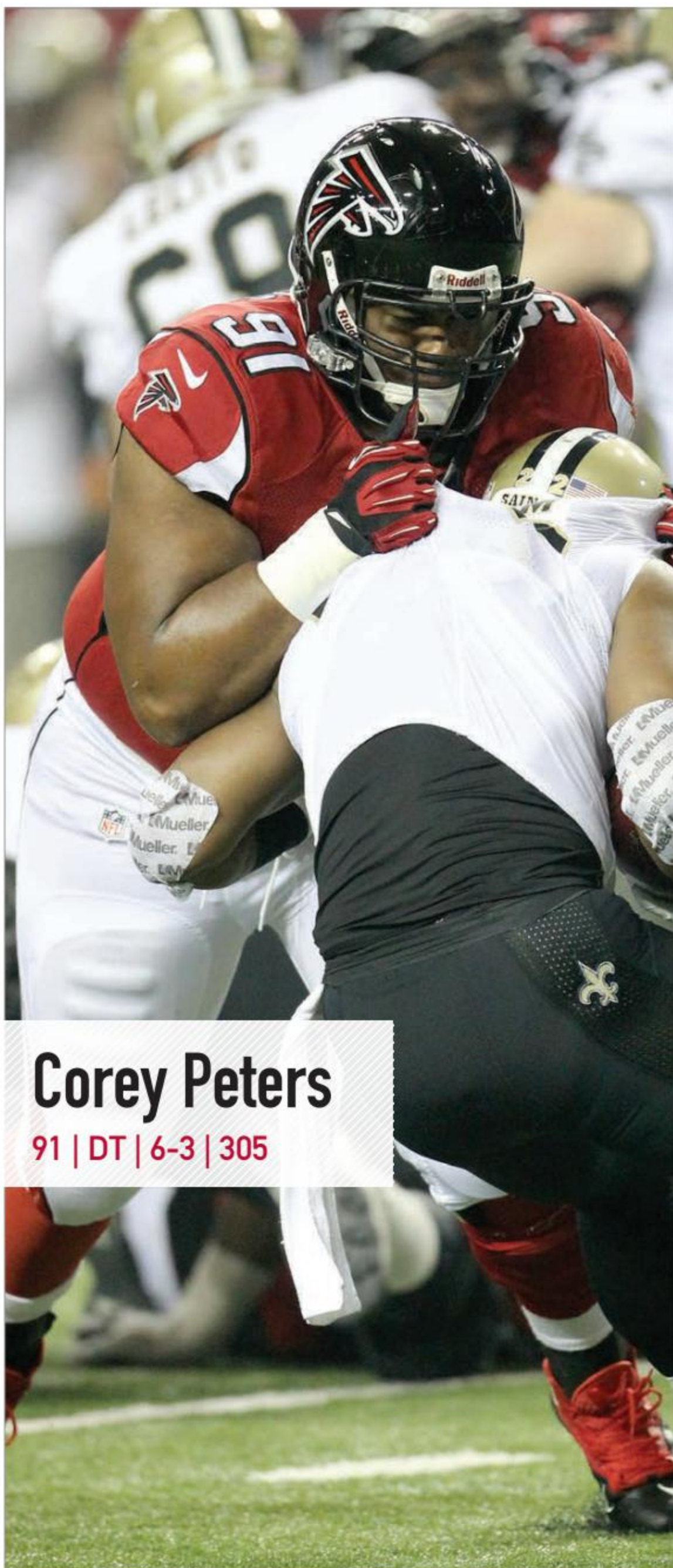
Tied the record for most touchdown receptions in a game at Fresno State with three in 2007.

Pascoe grew up in central California where his family runs a working cattle ranch where he is one of the best up-and-coming team ropers in the sport.

In high school, "Bear" was ranked as Offensive Player of the Year for the East Yosemite League and was also named All-Area team.

Also holds the Fresno State record for most field goal blocks in a career with six.

Full name is McKenna Sean Pascoe. McKenna weighed 10 pounds at birth, when he acquired his nickname, "Bear".



Corey Peters

91 | DT | 6-3 | 305



Birthdate: 6/8/1988

College: Kentucky

Year: 5

Drafted 83rd Pick, 3rd Round, 2010 Draft

2013 Season

Had a personal season-high of five sacks last season.

Notched 54 total tackles (42 solo), five sacks and two passes defended.

Tore his Achilles in Week 16.

Career

Has played in 120 career games with 53 starts recording nine sacks, seven pass deflections, two forced fumbles, two fumble recoveries and one interception.

Played in 10 games with eight starts after spending the first six weeks of the 2012 season on the Reserve/Non-football injury list.

Helped anchor a defensive line that produced 46 tackles behind the line of scrimmage, which was tied for seventh in the NFL in 2012.

Played a key role in the defensive line rotation that helped Atlanta rank fifth in the NFL in scoring defense in the 2012 season, allowing 18.7 points per game.

Awarded Falcons Man of the Year Community honor in 2011.

Family

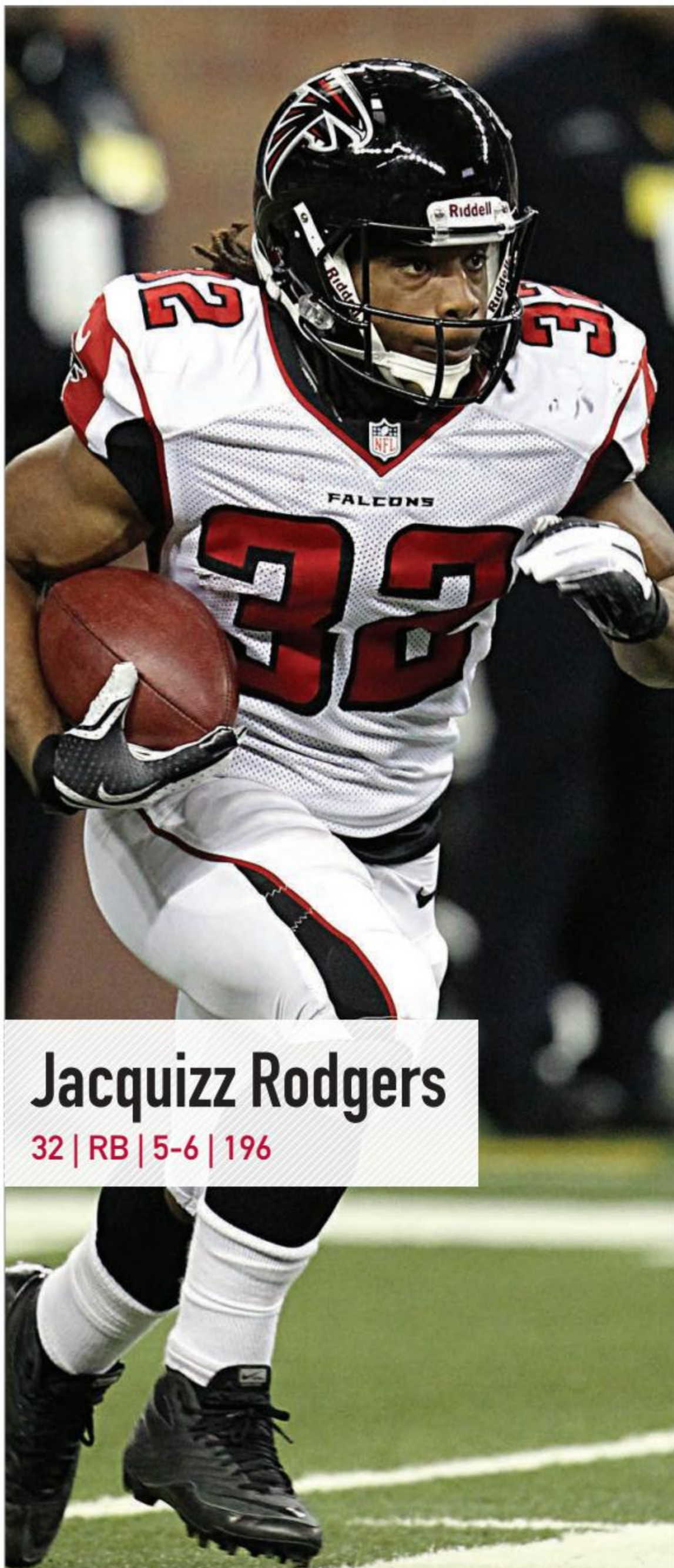
Born in Pittsburgh, Penn. and is the son of Vanessa and Clifton Peters.

Interesting Facts

A two-time SEC Academic Honor Roll honoree at Kentucky (2007-08).

First team All-State at Louisville Central High School.

Lettered in baseball, wrestling, and track and field in high school.



Jacquizz Rodgers

32 | RB | 5-6 | 196



Birthdate: 2/6/1990

College: Oregon State

Year: 4

Drafted 145th Pick, 5th Round, 2011 Draft

2013 Season

Rushed for 332 rushing yards on 96 attempts and had 341 receiving yards on 52 receptions.

Had four touchdowns last season (two rushing and two receiving).

Last year's game against the Jets marked his first NFL game with two rushing scores.

Had a team-high eight receptions and two receiving touchdowns against Tampa Bay.

Led the Falcons in rushing five times in 2013.

Career

Rodgers has totaled 899 rushing yards and 931 receiving yards in three seasons in Atlanta.

Has scored eight NFL touchdowns, four each on the ground and through the air.

Named AP All-American and First-Team All Pac-12 (2008-2010).

At Lamar Consolidated High School in Rosenberg, Texas, he ran for 8,245 yards and set the Texas state record for total touchdowns with 135.

Family

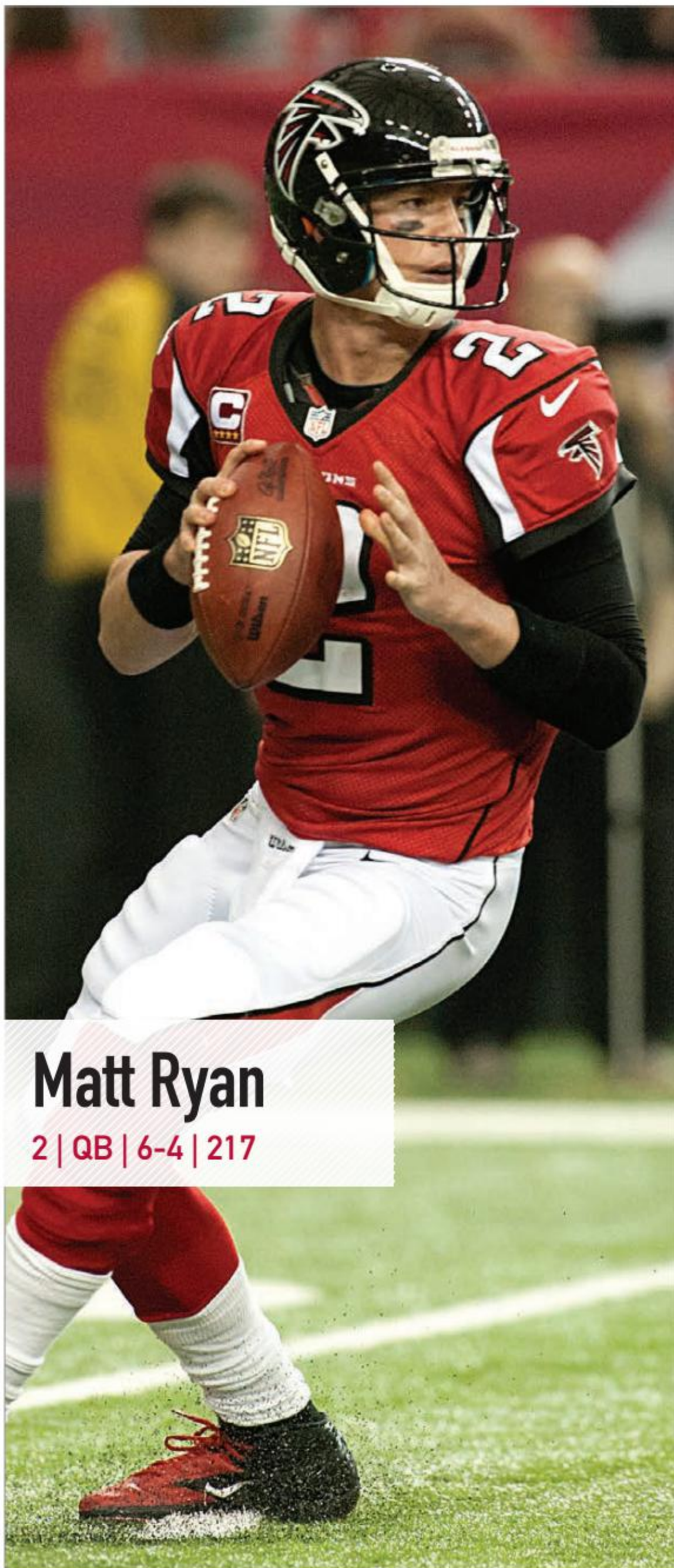
His older brother James was a member of the Falcons practice squad in 2012.

Uncle is Michael Lewis, a 2002 NFL draft pick who played until 2010.

Interesting Facts

Pac-12 Conference's all-time leading freshman rusher with 1,253 yards.

Lettered in basketball and track and field as a point guard and relay runner in high school.



Matt Ryan

2 | QB | 6-4 | 217



Birthdate: 5/17/1985

College: Boston College

Year: 7

Drafted 3rd Pick, 1st Round, 2008 Draft

2013 Season

Completed 439 of 651 passes for 4,515 yards and 26 touchdowns.

On Dec. 30, 2013, Ryan surpassed Steve Bartkowski as the all-time franchise leader in passing yards.

Career

Second fastest active quarterback to reach the 50-win milestone.

Leads the Falcons with 23,472 career passing yards.

Only other quarterback in NFL history to attempt 600-plus passes and complete 68-plus percent of those passes in a single season.

Voted 2008 NFL AP Offensive Rookie of the Year after leading Atlanta to the playoffs.

Set franchise single-season records in pass attempts, completions, completion percentage, yards and touchdowns in 2012.

Family

Born in Exton, Pa. and is the son of Bernice and Michael Ryan.

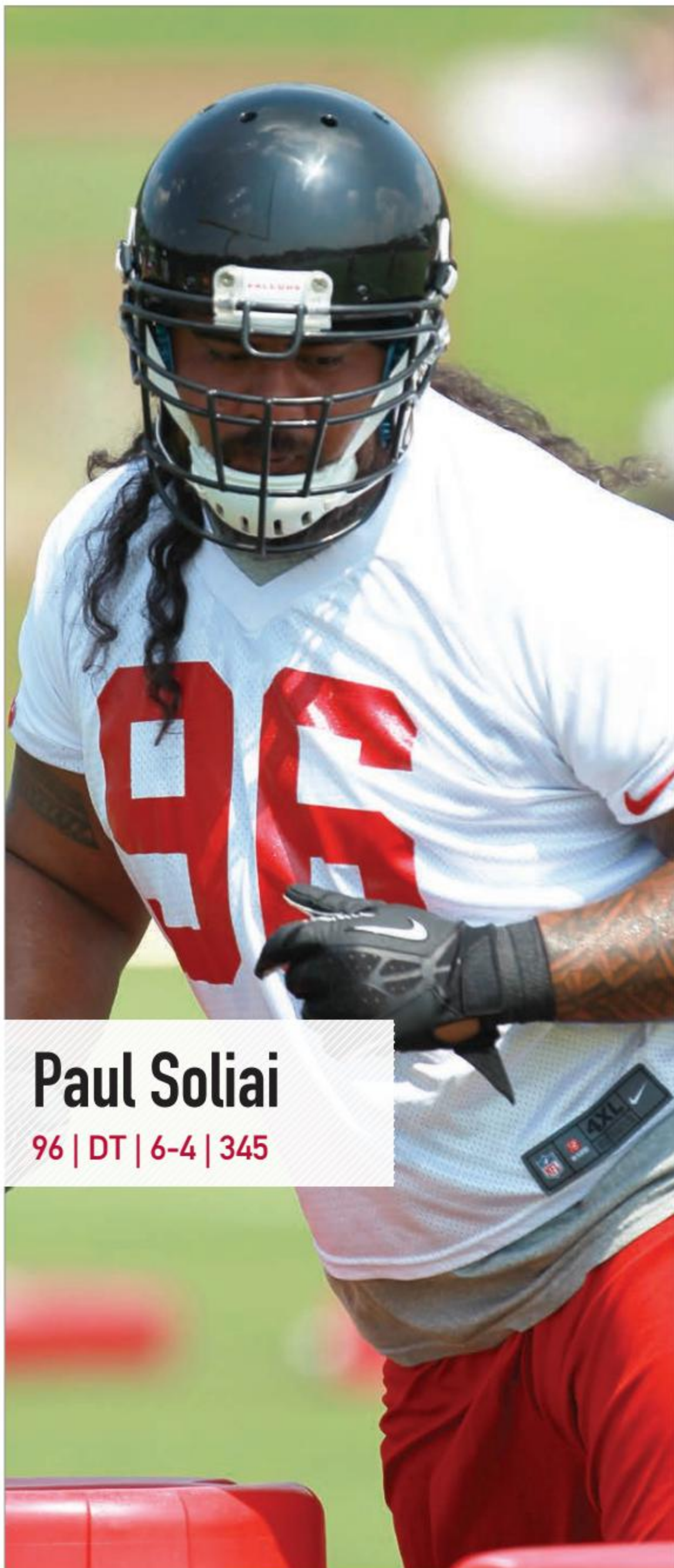
Ryan's wife Sarah played basketball at Boston College when the two met.

Interesting Facts

Ryan's first NFL pass was completed to Michael Jenkins for a 62-yard touchdown during a 34-21 win over Detroit.

The Philadelphia native was captain of the baseball, basketball and football teams in high school.

Tied for the highest Wonderlic score during the draft evaluations.



Paul Soliai

96 | DT | 6-4 | 345



Birthdate: 12/30/1983

College: Utah

Year: 8

Free Agent, 2014

2013 Season

Totaled 34 tackles (19 solo), one sack and one forced fumble in 15 games for the Dolphins.

Set a career high with five passes knocked down last season.

Career

Has appeared in 99 games with 62 starts for 160 tackles (117 solo), 4.5 sacks, two forced fumbles, two fumble recoveries and 12 passes defended.

Soliai earned his first career Pro Bowl selection in 2011 playing under Falcons Defensive Coordinator Mike Nolan while in Miami.

Was a fourth-round selection by Miami in the 2007 NFL Draft.

Family

Born in Santa Ana, Calif.

He and wife LeTasha donated \$250,000 to the University of Utah to help pay for a recreation area in the football center.

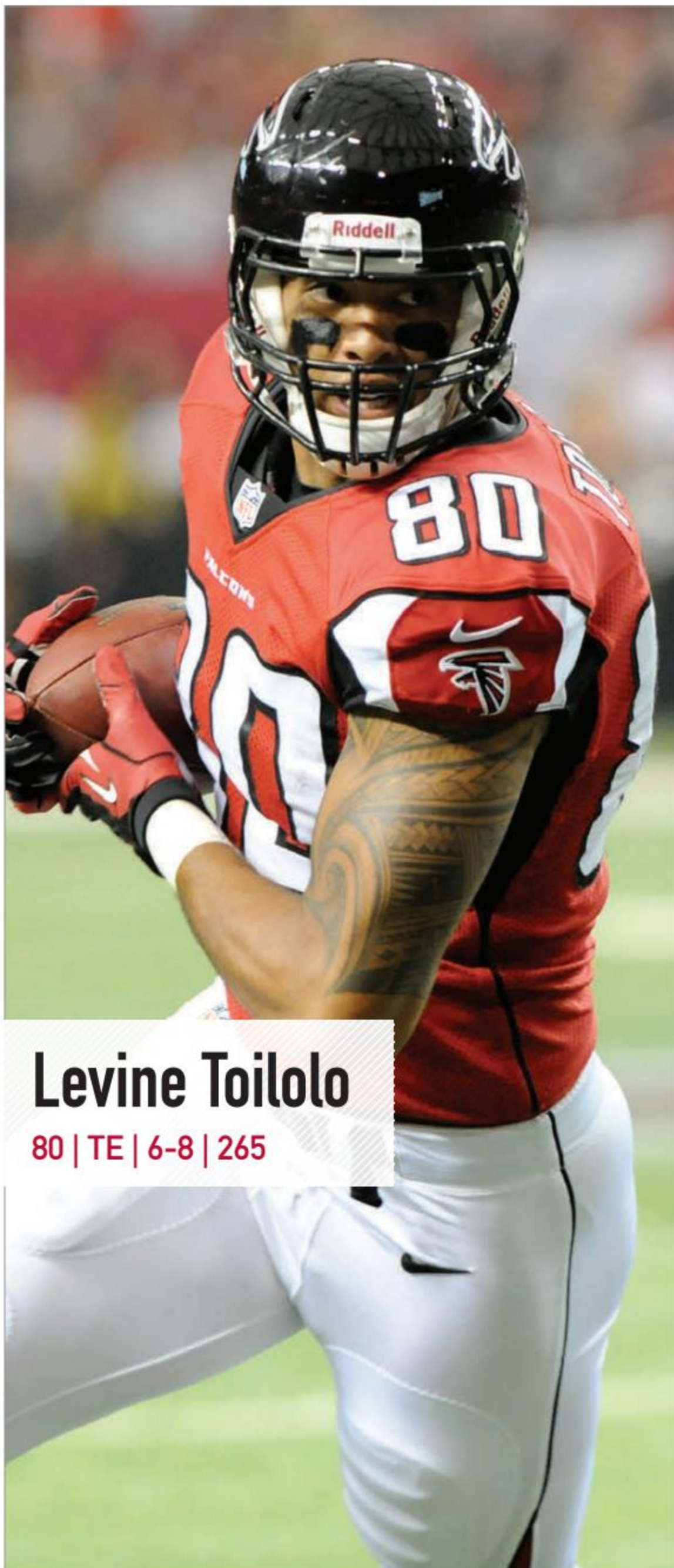
Interesting Facts

Spent two collegiate years at Coffeyville Community College in Coffeyville, Kan. before transferring to Utah.

Made the All-Jayhawk Conference team while at Coffeyville.

Played rugby and volleyball while growing up in Pago Pago, American Samoa.

Soliai is of Samoan descent and graduated from high school in American Samoa.



Levine Toilolo

80 | TE | 6-8 | 265



Birthdate: 7/30/1991

College: Stanford

Year: 2

Drafted 133rd Pick, 4th Round, 2013 Draft

2013 Season

As a rookie caught 11 receptions for 55 yards.

His first career reception came in Week 2 against the Rams.

His first career touchdown came in Week 3 versus the Dolphins.

Also caught a touchdown pass against the Jets in Week 5.

Earned his first career start against Carolina in the season finale.

Career

Finished at Stanford with 50 receptions for 763 yards (15.3 yards per catch) for 10 touchdowns in 31 career games.

Earned Pac-12 honorable mention in 2012.

His career high for receptions in a game is three, which came his rookie season against Arizona in Week 8.

Family

Born and raised in La Mesa, Calif.

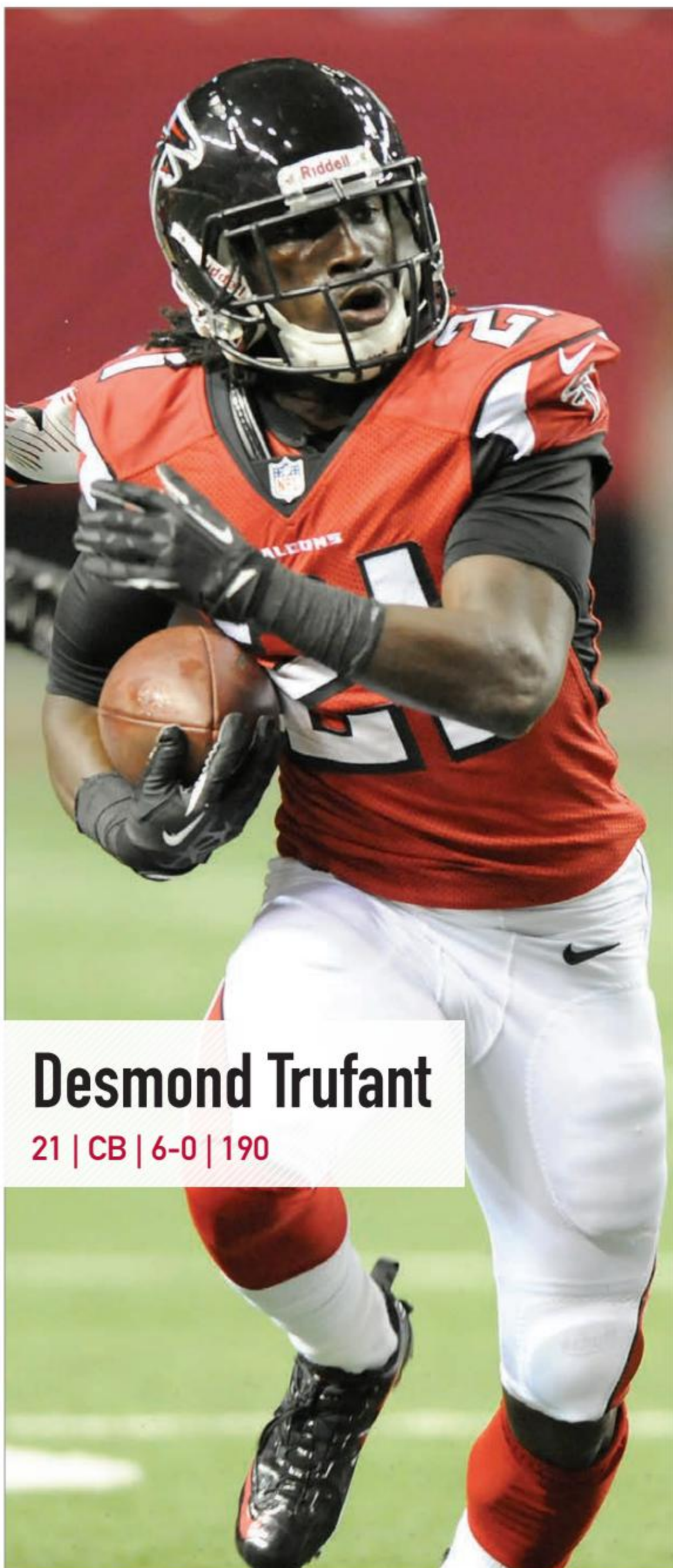
Interesting Facts

Earned Stanford's T.E.A.M. Technician Award for technique, effort, attitude and discipline in 2012.

Also in 2012, Toilolo led all Stanford receivers with 16.4 yards per catch average and scored four touchdowns on five receptions inside the red zone.

After catching just one pass his first two seasons at Stanford, caught a total of 49 balls for 763 yards and 10 scores his final two seasons.

At 6-foot-8, Toilolo is the tallest player on the Falcons roster.



Desmond Trufant

21 | CB | 6-0 | 190



Birthdate: 9/10/1990

College: Washington

Year: 2

Drafted 22nd pick, 1st round, 2013 draft

2013 Season

Recorded a total of 74 tackles (62 solo) and two interceptions in 2013.

Set Falcons rookie record with a team-high 17 passes defended.

Had a season-high seven tackles against Tampa Bay and Washington.

Named to All-NFL Rookie team.

Named Defensive Rookie of the Year by ProFootballFocus.com.

Career

Made 195 tackles (151 solo) with a school-record 39 passes defended, 8.5 tackles for loss, and six interceptions at Washington.

In his final year in college, he won the Guy Flaherty Award (school's most prestigious honor) as team's most outstanding player.

Was team captain at Washington during his senior season.

Family

Born in Tacoma, Wash.

Brothers Isaiah and Marcus also played cornerback in the NFL.

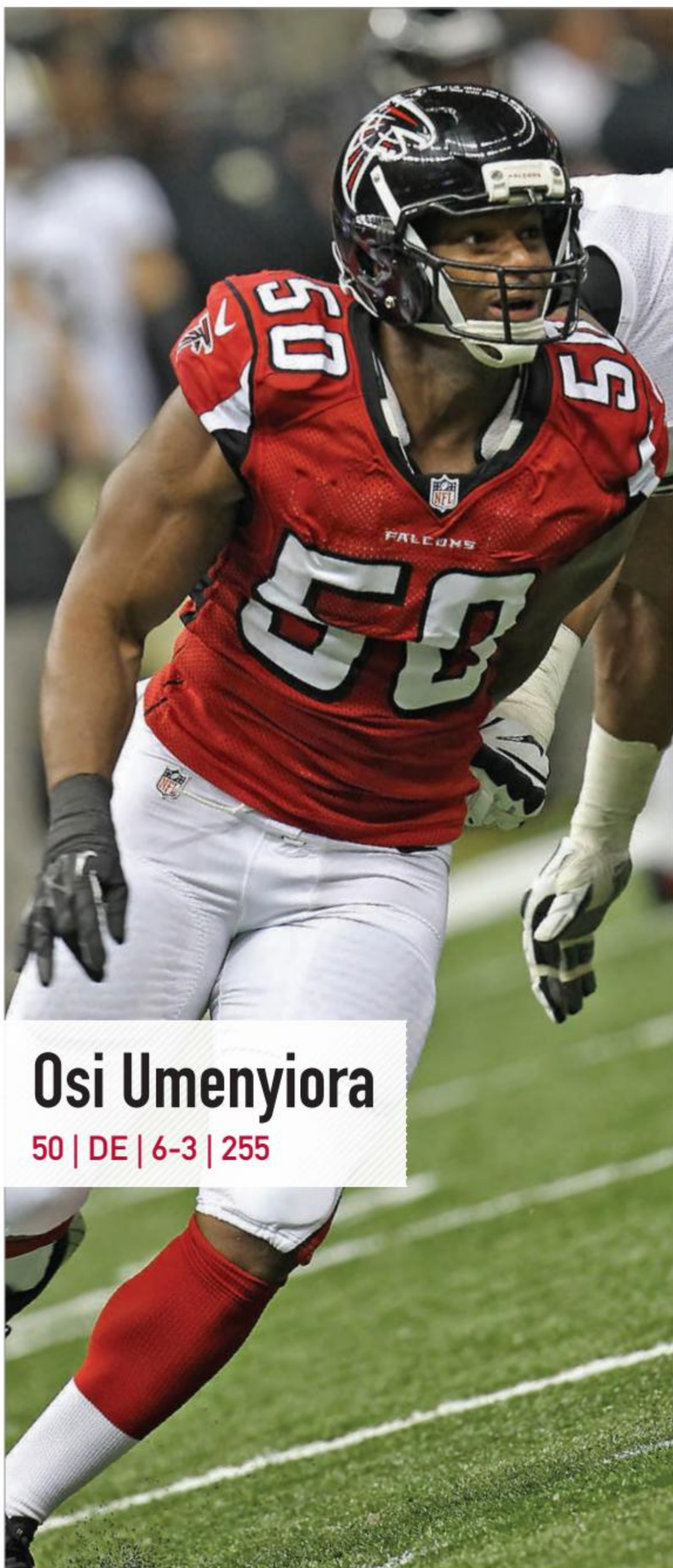
One of seven Falcons to have brothers in professional sports.

Interesting Facts

He accepted a scholarship to Washington over Washington State.

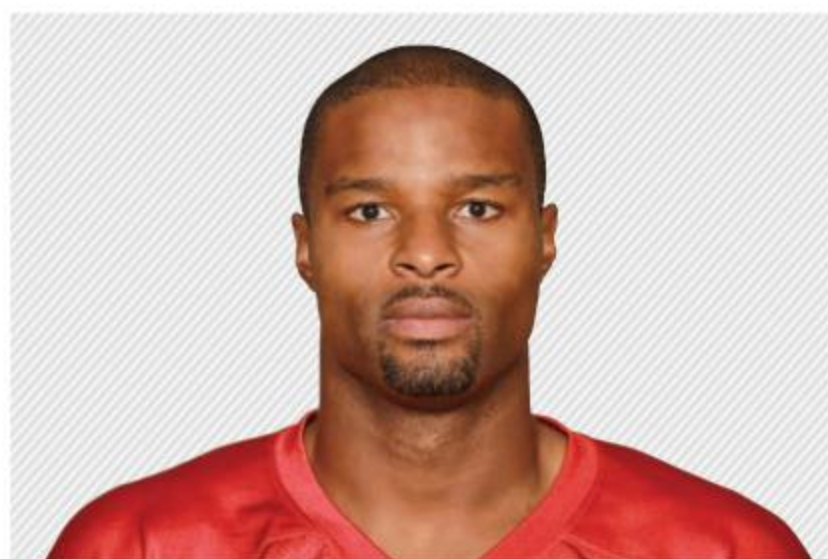
Was named to ESPN's Mel Kiper's all-rookie team.

Also ran track and played basketball at Wilson High School in Tacoma.



Osi Umenyiora

50 | DE | 6-3 | 255



Birthdate: 11/16/1981

College: Troy

Year: 12

Free Agent, 2013

2013 Season

Had 54 tackles and a team-high 7.5 sacks last season while starting in 13 games.

Returned an interception for a 68-yard touchdown during Atlanta's 31-24 win over St. Louis.

Made his first sack as a Falcon in Week 3 against Miami.

Career

Honorable mention All-American after his senior season at Troy University.

In 2005, recorded 14.5 sacks and All-Pro honors in addition to 70 tackles in what was his first full season as an NFL starter.

Recorded a Giants franchise single-game record with six sacks against the Eagles in 2007.

Won two Super Bowls with the Giants (2005, 2010).

Set an NFL single-season record with 10 forced fumbles in 2010.

Family

Osi has a six-year-old son named Tijani.

Engaged to 2011 Miss Universe Leila Lopes.

Son of John and Ijgoma Umenyiora.

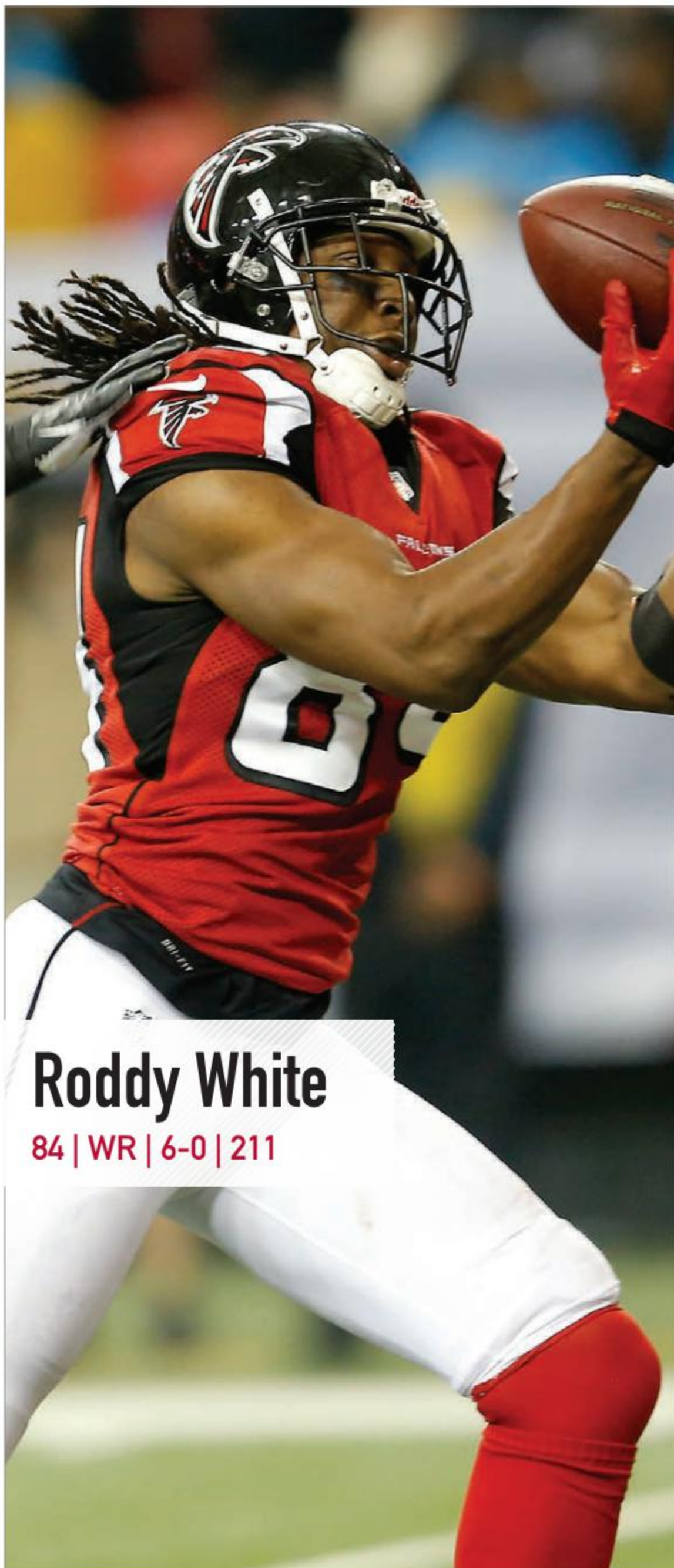
Interesting Facts

One of just three British-born players to win a Super Bowl.

Has lived in Atlanta for the past 15 years despite joining the team in 2013.

He's deemed a master of the sack fumble, and in 2007, sacked Trent Dilfer, forced the fumble, recovered it and ran it in 75 yards for a score.

Was named a Chief of a Nigerian village in 2007.



Roddy White

84 | WR | 6-0 | 211



Birthdate: 11/2/1981

College: Alabama-Birmingham

Year: 10

Drafted 27th Pick, 1st Round, 2005 Draft

2013 Season

White had 63 receptions for 711 yards and averaged 11.3 yards per catch last season.

Caught a season-high 12 passes against San Francisco.

Career

Increased his franchise record of career receiving yards to 9,436 yards with the Falcons.

Holds franchise record for most receiving yards in a single season with 1,389 yards in 2010.

Became the fifth player in NFL history to record three consecutive seasons with 90-plus receptions and 1,200-plus yards in 2012.

Became the sixth receiver in NFL history to record six consecutive seasons with at least 80 catches and 1,000 receiving yards in 2012.

Broke former Falcons WR Terance Mathis' franchise record for career postseason receptions with his 24th playoff grab during the 2012 NFC Divisional playoff game.

Hauled in seven catches for 100 yards in the 2012 NFC Championship Game against San Francisco, his first 100-yard postseason game.

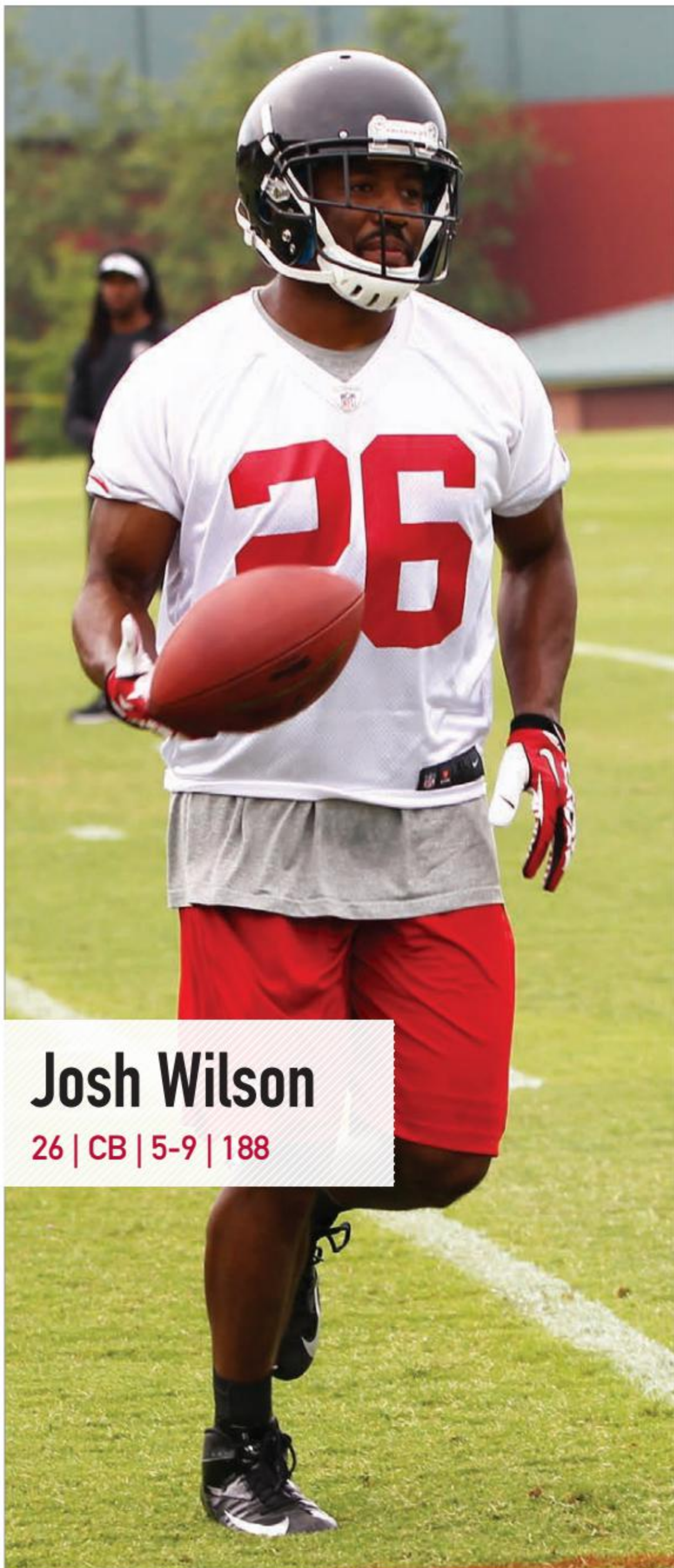
Family

Son of Joenethia White, was born Sharod Lamor "Roddy" White in James Island, S.C.

Interesting Facts

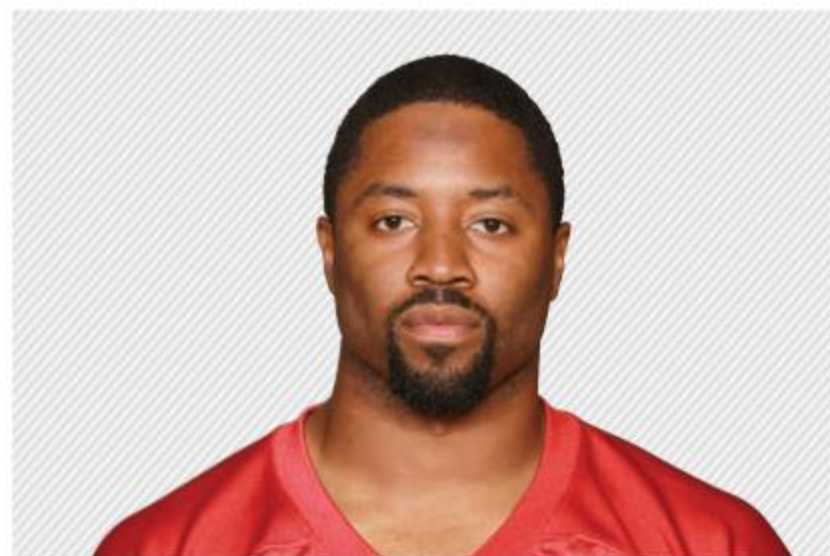
Started his own foundation after being drafted by the club in 2005, "Keep The Faith Foundation".

Lead UAB to its first and only bowl game, the Sheraton Hawaii Bowl.



Josh Wilson

26 | CB | 5-9 | 188



Birthdate: 3/11/1985

College: Maryland

Year: 8

Free Agent, 2014

2013 Season

Started 16 games with the Redskins and totaled a career-high 93 total tackles while adding a career-best two sacks and three fumble recoveries.

Career

Has 14 career interceptions with four interception returns for touchdowns, including a 75-yard return in 2008 with the Seahawks.

Started all 16 games during the Redskins run to the NFC East division title in 2012 and finished with 13 pass deflections and a pair of interceptions.

Blocked three kicks, tallied 157 career tackles and set the single-season record for kick return yards (847) while at the University of Maryland.

Family

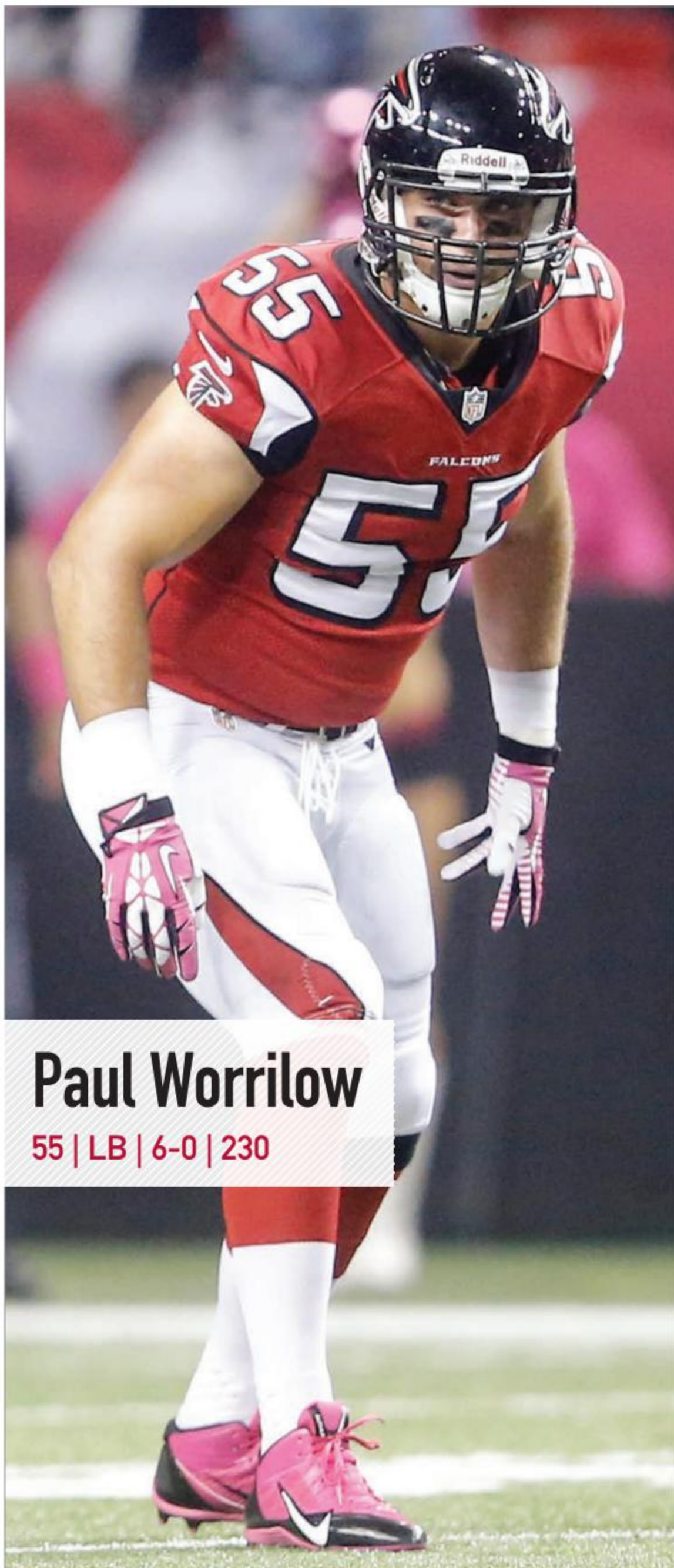
Father Tim Wilson played in the NFL for eight seasons with the Houston Oilers and New Orleans Saints.

Tim died at the age of 42 and Josh continues to carry around his father's football card.

Interesting Facts

At DeMatha Catholic High School, Wilson was a part of the school record-setting 4x100 meter relay team and also set individual state records in the 100 meters (10.84) and the 200 meters (21.56).

During Week 3 of his 2007 rookie season, Wilson returned the opening kickoff 89 yards for his first-career touchdown.



Paul Worrilow

55 | LB | 6-0 | 230



Birthdate: 5/1/1990

College: Delaware

Year: 2

Undrafted Free Agent, 2013

2013 Season

Named to 2014 NFL All-Rookie team after leading Atlanta with 137 combined tackles.

Became the only undrafted rookie to ever lead team in tackles.

Totaled 19 tackles in consecutive weeks last season and had an incredible 54 total tackles in Weeks 9-11.

Career

Led the Falcons in tackles last season with 92 solo tackles and 137 total takedowns.

Finished his collegiate career with 377 tackles and earned a scholarship his first season as a walk-on while starting in every game for the Blue Hens of the University of Delaware.

Led Concord High School to the Division II state championship as an all-state fullback and linebacker.

Family

The second youngest of the four Worrilow brothers.

One brother, Edward, is a marketing professional and pianist.

Other brother, Mark, captained Ursinus College's team in 2009 and younger brother, James, is currently a defensive lineman on the team.

Interesting Facts

Worrilow's breakout season in Atlanta earned him the John J. Brady Delaware Athlete of the Year Award from the Delaware Sportswriters and Broadcasters Association.

Donated his bone marrow in 2011 to help save the life of a 23-year-old female leukemia patient.



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